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EDITORIAL

LAYING THE GROUNDWORK

The political season has begun with an unexpected burst of energy and imagination. All at once, in Reagan's cruelest April, signs of life started sprouting from the dormant roots of left-wing and liberal activism. The Rainbow Coalition met in Washington to form a progressive force for political action at the local and national levels (see page 604). At the same time the fourth annual Socialist Scholars Conference drew more than 2,000 people in New York City to discuss a range of practical and philosophical issues. This weekend, the New Directions Conference gathers in Washington to develop a program of "democratic renewal."

Candidates for office are expressing the progressive impulse in a variety of ways, suited to their particular conditions. In New York, former Nader Raider Mark Green is seeking the Democratic nomination to oppose Reagan stalwart Senator Alfonse D'Amato. In Vermont, often a living laboratory for experiments in political organizing, Socialist Mayor Bernie Sanders of Burlington is preparing to run as an independent against incumbent Democratic Governor Madeleine Kunin, who has charted an unremarkable neoliberal course.

The conventions and the candidacies have started the process of identifying the issues and projecting the available strategies for the left as it approaches elections later this year and moves on to 1988. Is there a political life for progressives outside the Democratic Party? Can the old New Deal liberal/labor constituency be reassembled, as Michael Harrington argues across the page, or should a new kind of coalition be forged, based on the insurgent movements that arose in the 1960s and 1970s? These questions go to the heart of a historic debate that will shape American politics through the end of this century.

LIBYA, GRENADA AND REAGAN
Ramsey Clark

SOVIET CIVIC COURAGE
Stephen F. Cohen

AFRICAN NATIONAL CONGRESS
Stephen Talbot

TROUBLE IN HELMS LAND
Ferrel Guillory

DISCOVERY—'THE NATION' POETRY WINNERS

BACK TO THE BASICS

PROGRESSIVE ECONOMICS FOR 1988

MICHAEL HARRINGTON

Let us suppose that the Democratic Party wins the Senate in 1986 and the presidency in 1988. To the extent that the major progressive forces in this country are politically organized, they are found in the Democratic Party and will work for that outcome because, whatever its drawbacks, it is clearly better than a Republican victory.

But are the Democrats prepared for their own triumph? Their criticisms of Ronald Reagan's policies are often trenchant, but what alternatives do they propose? For instance, if one believes that Reagan has not defeated the business cycle and that a recession between now and January 20, 1989, is likely, what will the Democratic Party's response be? If there is a downturn that results in "only" 9 percent unemployment and a Federal deficit of more than $300 billion, what then?

Let me be more precise and address the liberal/labor wing of the Democratic Party, to which I belong. A major sector of the party has already retreated to neoliberalism and is apologizing for the excessive government spending of the 1960s. In fact, that alleged wild spending never took place. About three-quarters of domestic outlays for social programs go to people over the age of 65; the major spending hikes of the Kennedy, Johnson and Nixon years came in the form of increased Social Security benefits and Medicare, measures that Reagan himself dares not attack head on.

Granted that the neoliberals have little to propose and that they place excessive faith in the potential dividends from education and high technology, which will not survive the first

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EXCHANGE.

The following is a continuation of the exchange that appeared in last week's issue, on Gore Vidal's March 22 article "The Empire Lovers Strike Back." Vidal's replies appear in italics after each letter.

SOILING 'THE NATION'

New York City

As a sometime friend of *The Nation*, I found Gore Vidal's article distinctly unfriendly. Since I suppose Vidal would consign me to the same boat to Israel as the Podhoretzes, this may come as no surprise. What does surprise me (apart from the vulgarity to which Vidal is now reduced in his writing) is that *The Nation* would permit its anniversary issue to be thus soiled. *Floyd Abrams*

Simply because, as a lawyer, Floyd Abrams lost The Nation*'s First Amendment case to a bad novelist named Gerald Ford is no reason not to remain friends.*

'POLITICS OF HATE'

Washington

In "The Empire Lovers Strike Back," Gore Vidal is more intent on proving his cleverness, wit and leftist credentials than in saying anything intelligent. He begins by accusing Norman Podhoretz and Midge Decter of engaging in ad hominem attacks ("a right-wing specialty," he adds nonsensically), and then follows with personal, anti-Semitic attacks on them. Surely *The Nation* could have come up with an equally critical but more civilized article.

Thankfully, Vidal's vitriolic attacks are so patently unfair and wrongheaded that few except the most rabidly anti-Semitic and ultraleftist will agree with them. Even *The Village Voice* condemned Vidal. Podhoretz and Decter certainly don't have to prove their loyalty to the United States or explain their support for Israel, one of the few liberal democracies in the world.

Vidal accuses Podhoretz and Decter of reveling in "the politics of hate," but his article is so full of bitterness and acridity that it is clear that Vidal is the one who is hateful and, in all probability, jealous of the respect they are accorded. *Paul M. Weyrich*
President, Free Congress Research and Education Foundation

Is it possible to have "one of the few liberal democracies in the world" and exclude from citizenship more than 700,000 Arabs? I suspect that this letter is a put-on, the mischievous work of a Shiite Arab.

REQUIEM OF RACISM

New York City

It certainly takes historical imagination to revitalize the Yellow Peril and place it on the political agenda of America in the mid-1980s. That appears to be what Gore Vidal thinks his gift is destined for at the moment. In his January 11 essay, "Requiem for the American Empire," Vidal solemnly pronounced warnings of a futuristic Asian conquest of the white race worldwide, which is, supposedly, in long-term decline. Was this an aberrant thought on the part of a writer of Vidal's stature? Apparently not. His follow-up article in *The Nation*'s 120th anniversary issue shows Vidal's true, almost physical, distaste at the idea of being dominated by "the more than 1 billion grimly efficient Asiatics"!

Vidal is displeased by people raking up his Hollywood past, yet for all his intelligence and cold anger, one suspects Hollywood, the fountainhead of racist slurs and mainstream stereotyping, has colored his imagination. In Michael Cimino's recent film *The Year of the Dragon*, a police captain named White, a Vietnam War veteran, calls the Vietnamese guerrillas "midget fighters." Captain White would prefer not to see a Chinese face except when it is bringing him spare ribs. Yes, "grimly efficient" indeed.

Racism has always been spurred by economic insecurity. Claims such as "The Japs have ruined the American auto industry," or "Asian immigrants have stolen jobs from Americans," have encouraged anti-Asian sentiment, rhetoric and violence in the past few years, to the extent that the Federal Commission on Civil Rights has started making a study of the issue. Its report will come out later this year.

When Vidal prophesies a Sino-Japanese economic power axis looming on the global horizon, he overlooks the fact that right now the United States is the largest foreign investor in China. Moreover, the Japanese invasion of China in World War II inflicted painful wounds, and despite recent efforts to mend relations between the two countries, the scars remain in the Chinese mind.

It is hard to figure out why Vidal cannot see that capital is racially color-blind. Staggering to tread the capitalist road, China now welcomes foreign investors of all kinds, almost nonselectively. Preference is given to the white investors for their centuries of inherited glory, rather than to the Japanese, whom the Chinese distrust and envy. Pan-Asianism is a nonexistent ideology, except to Vidal.

Racism corrupts consciousness. In his January 11 essay, Vidal quoted Confucius as saying that were he able to rule the state, the first thing he would do is "rectify the language." More exactly, Confucius said "rectify the names," which naturally entails concrete thinking. It is always counterproductive to think abstractly about people, that is, in the collective.

What kind of America is Vidal envisioning when he proposes a U.S.-Soviet axis under the aegis of whiteness? I'm afraid no more than an America with all its current deficiencies, in which women, the poor, blacks and minority groups of all sorts are de facto excluded.

No, anti-Asianism and its ideological consequence is not worthy of a brilliant writer like Gore Vidal, who, during a visit to the Gobi Desert in 1982, proposed a toast to Kublai Khan because that Mongol Emperor opened up "a peaceful discourse between East and West." But is racial conquest the only means to achieve that?

Evans Chan
China Daily News

This letter, though wonderfully muddled, is the only interesting one of the lot. Let's get the muddles out of the way. I assume that Evans Chan is an American. If he is, irony is apt to be unknown to him. In my context, "1 billion grimly efficient Asiatics" is an ironic twist on those current protectionist-cum-racist themes he mentions. Certainly, I made it clear that I abhorred the essential racism at the heart of the American Empire and its original Manifest Destiny. The ironic toast in the Gobi Desert to Kublai Khan was intended to amuse the Mongols present, which it did, and discomfit their Soviet overlords present, which it did. I hope Chan is not anti-Mongol.

Chan makes sense when he writes, "Racism has always been spurred by economic insecurity"; in other words, when you're losing, it's scapegoat time. But where Chan has the Yellow Peril on his mind, I had the White Peril on mine in "Requiem." I thought my case was clearly made. Apparently, it was not. Recap: as we have made the Asiatics suffer during the past two centuries, so might they be inclined, economically, *to make us suffer once the Sino-Japanese alliance takes place. Chan thinks this alliance unlikely because of ancient enmities. I disagree: no enmity is eternal. He also seems unaware that in 1985 Japan became China's number-one trading partner. I propose that the United States and the Soviet Union—two economic wrecks, thanks to the arms race—as the two great powers of the Northern Hemisphere, unite in order to compete,* economically, *with the Asiatic world. That is hardly racism. It is common sense. We are geographic neighbors who complement each other. There is not a chance that we could ever establish an economic hegemony over the Asiatic—much less the entire—world. At best, we would be competitive.*

As for Confucius, the word "language" (and not "names") is the traditional English rendering. Finally, Chan, never forget Confucius' admonition: "Do not do to others what you would not like yourself. Then there will be no feelings of opposition to you, whether it is the affairs of a state you are handling or the affairs of a family."

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EDITORIALS.

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Revolution Lost

The soldiers of the revolution entered the capital in triumph, to the cheering of multitudes and the embraces of supporters who had waited long and desperate years for the glorious day. They remembered the awful moment a generation before when a ragtag radical assault on the nation's seat of power had ended in an ignominious rout and earned them the scorn of the populace. Through the wars and uprisings, the economic crises and social discontent that followed, the rebels struggled to survive in their desert redoubts and mountain homes, refining the program that would ultimately bring them to victory and waiting for the chance they believed must come. And then, inevitably, it did come. When the weak and discredited leader, the last of his line, failed to meet the major domestic and foreign challenges of his regime, the old order, which had held sway for half a century, crumbled under the weight of its broken promises and arrant extravagance. Now priests and pastors from renegade wings of their churches sanctified the new revolutionary order, and the soldiers, still wearing the distinctive uniforms of their caste, took hold of the reins of government.

How quickly their high hopes were dashed! As David Stockman laments in his memoirs, excerpted by *Newsweek*

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in that magazine's first major effort at historical documentation since its publication of the Hitler diaries in 1983, the Reagan revolution was betrayed almost as soon as it began. Venal politicians, entrenched interests and a vacillating President prevented the Stockmanistas from gutting the structure of welfarism that supported the old liberal system, and thus from resolving the contradictions of late capitalism in favor of industrial expansion. George Bush, after all, was smarter than we thought. "Voodoo economics" made many millionaires, stood inflation on its head and reelected the President, but it did not solve the paramount problem of growth, without which the Reagan program is just so much right-wing baloney. When Reagan "surrendered" on Social Security cuts, when he refused to raise taxes, pare Pentagon spending and dismantle the myriad entitlements of the beneficent state, the revolutionary effort was doomed.

Is Stockman bitterly right, or just bitter? With the regularity of alternate-side-of-the-street parking, Reagan presents a vastly different appearance from one day to the next. On Monday, Wednesday and Friday he is going great guns, cannonading at will, decimating liberal ranks, sending economic indexes through the roof and pushing his popularity to dizzying heights. On Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday he seems overwhelmed by events, lashing out violently but aimlessly, isolated in the world and reduced to dangerous but transparent demagogy in the absence of a coherent strategy to achieve even the grotesque goals of his historic political project.

The polls do not yet reveal the similarity between this peculiarly popular President and that discredited leader in the days before the revolution. The failure of liberalism gave rise to an opposition that fought and won under the ideological banner of Reaganism. By rights, the betrayals, breaches of faith, hypocrisies and broken promises of the present regime—way beyond what Stockman mentions in his self-serving screed—should spark a new opposition and another revolt. It still needs a leader and a vision, but already the will exists to change a course that has failed not only on its own twisted terms but as a grand design for the future.

Rainbow's Beginning

Two issues dominated the founding convention of the National Rainbow Coalition, held from April 17 to 19 in Washington. But more significant than those issues were the individuals who gathered in a room to chart the movement's course. There were white farmers and black farmers from the South; rank-and-file unionists and their "natural" enemies, immigrant Haitians and Filipinos; black church ladies and lesbian activists; debt-ridden farmers from the Middle West who had foolishly voted for Ronald Reagan; urban leftists, tenants, preachers and college students.

The issues centered on democracy and Democrats. The nearly 800 delegates seemed intent on building a structure. But when the bylaws, which only one hundred delegates had seen, were placed before them, the preoccupation with structure gave way to a demand for more democracy. The majority wanted political endorsements and strategies to be decided locally, and the grass roots to be well represented in the national leadership. This debate produced a synthesis: the National Rainbow Coalition has the structure—bylaws and machinery for chartering state parties, a formal leadership body and a process for ratifying a platform—but it also has democratic checks up and down the line.

The convention's second issue was more important to the press than to the delegates: Will Jesse Jackson run for President as a Democrat or an independent? reporters asked. Is the Rainbow Coalition part of the Democratic Party or is it a third party? Jackson, with apparent conviction, and the activist delegates, with assurance born of experience, objected to the way the questions were framed. What matters, they said, is drawing up a progressive platform. There are candidates in Alabama, Vermont, Texas and elsewhere running as Rainbow Democrats, and there may well be an independent running for governor of Vermont on the Rainbow platform with Jackson's blessing. Although several Democratic officeholders attended the convention at Jackson's invitation, there was more Democrat-bashing than protestations of party loyalty.

The direction of the Rainbow movement will be determined more by grass-roots issues and organizing than by any single person's vision. If Jackson does not repudiate the progressive independent politics favored by his followers, he might just find himself carried along by their momentum.

Libya, Grenada And Reagan

Ronald Reagan believes might makes right. First elected to public office by appealing to the fear and hatred that flowed from the Watts riots of 1965, he consistently advocates violence as the solution to all problems. The death penalty, abolition of gun control, arbitrary use of police power, acceleration of the arms race, continuation of nuclear testing, escalation of research and development to achieve military superiority, and violent strikes against ostracized enemies are the hallmarks of his faith.

If his preference for violence is to prevail, he must gain public support by subverting truth and evading the law. When his desire to attack Nicaragua was frustrated in 1981, he began a propaganda campaign to create hostility toward Grenada, Cuba, Libya and the Soviet Union.

The April 14 bombing of Tripoli ought to have reminded us of the U.S. invasion of Grenada on October 25, 1983, which killed and wounded scores of the tiny island's people

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and condemned the survivors to another generation of poverty. That action was Reagan's first venture into international violence.

The most notable and ultimately disturbing thing about the attack on Grenada is the near-total success the Administration has had in controlling and distorting information about what took place. The U.S. media acquiesced in the exclusion of reporters from the invasion. Few Americans have questioned the Administration's false claims that U.S. forces were invited to invade or that the operation was necessary to save the lives of U.S. medical students.

Little has been written in this country about the case of the nineteen former Grenadian officials and soldiers who have been charged with the murder of Prime Minister Maurice Bishop and six others. Their case has just been abruptly ordered to trial before the High Court of Grenada. The defendants include Gen. Hudson Austin and Bernard and Phyllis Coard. They face the death penalty. No member of the U.S. press has interviewed even one of the accused, and as of this writing, no stories have appeared in the United States about the months the prisoners spent in solitary confinement, the beatings they suffered and the statements they were compelled to make while in de facto U.S. custody. Instead, the accused have been vilified by U.S. officials, including President Reagan, and by the press, which depends completely on government sources. Their side of the case has been suppressed.

The Reagan Administration, which staged elections in Grenada in 1984, has never criticized the Grenadian authorities' failure, two and a half years after the invasion, to create a constitutional court system. The defendants challenged the legitimacy of the court, and in a decision issued on May 10, 1985, the Grenadian Court of Appeals agreed that the present system was unconstitutional but said it was justified nonetheless by the continuing emergency.

Pretrial proceedings have been marked by other irregularities, all unreported in the U.S. media, including the government's arbitrary hiring, under a three-month contract, of a special judge to hear the case; the appointment of a former member of the prosecution team as registrar, responsible for choosing 140 prospective jurors; the exclusion of the public and the defendants' families from the courtroom; the jeers of prospective jurors at the defense lawyers when the judge threatened the latter with contempt on April 11; the refusal on April 15 of all defense counsel to participate in the proceedings of an unconstitutional court, on the defendants' instructions; the forced removal of seventeen of the defendants from the courtroom; the selection of a jury in the absence of defendants and their attorneys on April 18. The trial is to take place without the defendants, their lawyers or any U.S. reporters present. These activities occurred after President Reagan visited Grenada on February 20 and with a U.S. government observer in court.

In addition, important defense motions questioning the fairness of the trial have not been considered, and the right to appeal to a Commonwealth court, the Queen's Privy Counsel in London, guaranteed in the 1973 Constitution, has been denied. The only review of the case will therefore be made by judges appointed by the same Grenadian authority that seeks the death penalty.

We do not know what role U.S. informers and agents played in the events that led to and followed the death of Maurice Bishop on October 19. We do know that he was held in his home for six days, that he was released to a crowd of supporters and that he then moved with the crowd to Fort Rupert, where he was murdered. Unless the United States opens its secret archives, independent investigative reporters probe the matter, and all the evidence comes out at a fair trial, we will never know what really happened on Grenada prior to the invasion and what responsibility, if any, the accused bear for Bishop's death.

Now there are questions about the Administration's plans to overthrow Col. Muammar el-Qaddafi. Secretary of State Shultz and other Administration officials have openly supported an insurrection. President Reagan has used violent language, terming the Libyan ruler a mad dog. Although dozens of civilians were killed in the bombings, Reagan dared to smile on April 18 and say, "We weren't out to kill anybody."

As President, Ronald Reagan has violated every principle for which America stands. He denies the jurisdiction of the World Court; he acts without consulting Congress and in opposition to the advice of U.S. allies. Serving as judge, jury and executioner, he orders military strikes that kill civilians. He attempts to kill foreign leaders. He resorts to surprise attacks. He provokes a feeble Libyan action against U.S. ships in the Gulf of Sidra, falsely claiming to uphold freedom of the seas, so that his planes can kill and destroy with relative impunity.

Without legal authority he ordered U.S. support for the Nicaraguan *contras* knowing that they have murdered and raped their own people. When his mindless show of force in Lebanon cost the lives of 240 marines, he ordered the battleship New Jersey to lob 16-inch shells into Lebanon, striking villages and killing whoever happened to be in the area.

Ronald Reagan has committed these acts in violation of international law, of the Constitution and of the laws of the United States. The President has no legal power to order U.S. forces to murder indiscriminately and terrorize those he styles his enemies. Such acts constitute high crimes and misdemeanors.

Reagan's subversion of truth and the rule of law is the greatest threat facing the American people and indeed the world. We are responsible for our President's actions because we have the power to prevent them. If we care for the truth and for who we are, and if we want to restore the integrity of our constitutional system, we must demand the impeachment and trial of Ronald Reagan.

As Abraham Lincoln said on the eve of the Civil War, "Let us have faith that right makes might, and in that faith let us to the end dare to do our duty as we understand it."

RAMSEY CLARK

Ramsey Clark, former Attorney General of the United States, is legal adviser to the Coard family and was in Grenada at the time of the Tripoli bombing.

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MINORITY REPORT.

CHRISTOPHER HITCHENS

In September 1983, as every schoolchild has been conditioned to forget, the United States marines were in Beirut. Their mission was defined as one of "peacekeeping," and although in practice that meant shoring up the sectarian Phalangist government of the Gemayel family, there were soldiers who took their peacekeeping seriously. The Phalange had many enemies, among them the Druse, and there came a time when the Druse militia was pressing the government forces rather hard at Suk al Gharb. In panic, the Phalangists appealed to the Reagan Administration for aid. The appalling Robert McFarlane, then national security adviser, assented. A call was placed to Col. Timothy Geraghty, one of the three Marine commanders, ordering him to shell the Druse. In the best account of the incident, which occurs in Robin Wright's book *Sacred Rage*, we have the evidence of two officers who heard Geraghty say into his radio telephone: "Sir, I can't do that. This will cost us our neutrality. Do you realize if you do that, we'll get slaughtered down here?"

We don't know exactly what McFarlane said in response, but if he did not say something like "Stand tall, Geraghty, we're gonna show that we can kick ass," I should be very much surprised. No less than seventy heavy rounds were then fired at the Druse by the U.S.S. Virginia. Thus did the United States come to the aid of the forces that perpetrated the mass murder at Sabra and Shatila.

I would wager that most Americans are more familiar with the event that occurred thirty-four days later, when the Marine barracks in Beirut was blown skyward. The relative ignorance can be excused. What is unpardonable is the superpower self-pity, so deftly evoked by the Reaganites. Since Reagan came to power, the United States has bombed or shelled, or armed and supported the bombing and shelling of, Lebanon, Syria, Iraq, Tunisia and Libya—not to mention U.S. support and payment for the subjugation of the West Bank and for King Hassan's dirty war in the Western Sahara. Looking back, or rather not looking back, on this record, Americans dolefully ask why the Arab world is so ungrateful, and Europe so lacking in will. We are asked to applaud a demonstration of American willingness to use force. Who in the Middle East is supposed to have doubted that willingness?

A fair illustration of the mentality I am discussing is provided in the report of the Long Commission, which was asked by the Defense Department to find out what went wrong in Beirut. Typical of mainstream opinion was the testimony of Gen. Paul X. Kelley, commandant of the Marine Corps, to Congress. He stated at the outset that he would "avoid discussion of the political or diplomatic considerations of our presence in Lebanon," adding, "It is not the place of a marine to discuss those imperatives for military employment." Quite right too. Notice what the gallant general went on to say:

> [The Marine presence was] conducive to the stability of Lebanon. . . . We were guests of a friendly nation—not on occupation duty. . . . The marines were warmly greeted by the Lebanese people. . . . This unprecedented, massive kamikaze attack was not against young marines, sailors and soldiers; it was a vicious surprise attack against the United States of America and all we stand for in the free world.

You may say that it is too easy to make fun of the general for delivering the political rant he had sworn was no part of his job. But what are we to make of the report of the Long Commission itself? Describing the dispatch of U.S. forces to a shattered Lebanon, the report says, "It was anticipated that [U.S. forces] would be perceived by various factions as evenhanded and neutral." The sloppy use of that meaningless word "perceived" is employed to prevent one from asking the obvious question, "What factions?" or simply from saying, "Oh Yeah?" (let alone, "Anticipated by whom?").

A little later in the report, having noticed American complicity with the Phalange in subduing a village or two, the authors of the report say, "Although U.S. . . . actions could properly be classified as self-defense and 'not engaging in combat,' the environment could no longer be characterized as peaceful. The image of the ["peacekeeping" forces], in the eyes of the factional militias, had become pro-Israel, pro-Phalange, and anti-Muslim."

Even here the impression or perception of reality is preferred to the real thing. But at least the report concedes that those "factions" had got hold of the opposite end of the same stick in a very short space of time. We can either blame this on the notorious caprice of the Levantine mind, or we can wonder at a President surrounded by advisers who tell him to blame himself last.

Bear in mind that the Shiite population of Lebanon has the least reason of any people to admire Col. Muammar el-Qaddafi. Their holy Imam, Musa al-Sadr, was in all likelihood kidnapped and done to death during a visit to Libya. Yet the Shiites of Lebanon know the United States not as their protector from despotism but as the patron of Ariel Sharon and the author of Volkswagen-sized shells loosed from the U.S.S. New Jersey and Virginia. They hear a President who makes ignorant and hateful remarks about Islam and who gives friendly audience to the foul-mouthed bigot Pat Robertson—a man who televised his call for the United States to assassinate Qaddafi only three days before the attempt was actually made.

It may be too much to ask people to be self-critical all the time. But if any of the facts I have mentioned above were half as well known, or one-hundredth as often stressed, as the crimes of Qaddafi, the United States might have a chance of facing religious fanaticism as an opponent rather than a participant.

As it is, the country is being led into a shameful and stupid commitment, encouraged by precisely the same people who procured the horror of Lebanon and then refused to learn from it. It's much too late for my closing proposition, but I make it anyway. No interviewer, spokesperson or interviewee should henceforth be allowed to utter the word "terrorism" unless he or she can supply a definition that does not outrage decency and/or common sense.

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SOVIETICUS.

STEPHEN F. COHEN

Mikhail Gorbachev's campaign to bring about "fundamental changes" in the Soviet system raises an important question about his chances of success and about American perceptions of that system. Having launched a nationwide crusade against "all kinds of time-servers, careerists and bureaucrats" in the Soviet establishment, from political and economic life to culture, he and his allies are calling for the support of "honorable, conscientious, decent" members of those same elites. But do such people exist in the party and state bureaucracies that administer the authoritarian system, or among the other elites whose officially sanctioned careers have brought them status and privilege?

Evidently, most American commentators think that they do not. For many years media coverage of the Soviet Union has attributed virtuous qualities almost only to dissidents, émigrés and would-be émigrés, leaving the impression that the entire Soviet establishment is conformist, cynical, corrupt or worse. Even otherwise discriminating commentators regularly dismiss all Soviet political officials as "thugs" or "stooges," Soviet journalists as "cops" and accepted Soviet writers as "whores." In American eyes, it seems, no admirable person can work within the Soviet system.

To be both a successful and a decent person—a *poryadochnyi chelovek*, as Russians say admiringly—is exceedingly difficult in the Soviet Union. In a system where there are no effective democratic checks on abuses of power; where local authorities are often capricious; where protesting even petty wrongs can be risky; where decades of scarcity have created zealously guarded privileges; and where there are almost no alternatives to state-approved careers—in such a system a great many people eventually conform for understandable human reasons. Often they become indifferent to or accomplices in corruption, injustice and cover-ups, as is widely reported these days in Soviet newspapers.

And yet many members of the various Soviet elites do retain their ideals and their civic courage, as it has long been called in the Russia. How could it be otherwise in a nation where the word "conscience" has profound meaning, where the official ideology still professes lofty values and where 19 million adults belong to the Communist Party, which must therefore encompass the full range of human nature? Such people are neither dissidents nor abject conformists. They are ambitious, they love their country and they believe in the Soviet system. But they want the system to change in conformity with their own clear sense of right and wrong, and within their limited possibilities, they behave accordingly.

Frequent travelers to the Soviet Union know of numerous examples of admirable conduct by people of authority and official status. More important, their exemplary behavior is a recurrent theme in the best Soviet literature since the 1950s and even in dissident writings. It is demonstrated by party officials who argue for more enlightened policies and by economic managers who ignore central directives in order to make the system more productive; by journalists and editors who challenge the censorship and by schoolteachers and principals who defy orthodoxy in order to enrich their students' education; by exalted academicians and celebrated writers who try to help victimized colleagues and by young professionals who refuse to become informers in return for a promotion.

Political space for doing good deeds inside the system was considerably greater during Khrushchev's de-Stalinization policies than during Brezhnev's conservative reign. In the early 1960s, Len Karpinsky was a national leader of the Young Communist League and a rising party star. By 1975, as a result of advocating democratic reform behind the scenes, his career was in ruins and he was expelled from the party. In the 1960s, Ivan Khudenko, a state official in Kazakhstan, was authorized to organize an experimental alternative to the orthodox collective farm. Having offended powerful local politicians, he was convicted on false charges and, in 1974, died in prison. But those were exceptional cases. The great majority of *poryadochnyi* officials merely grew more cautious and did, as one confided, "what is right, when it is possible."

Now Gorbachev is appealing to their ideals and again raising their hopes. "Civic courage" has become a slogan of the leadership. Boris Yeltsin, an alternate Politburo member and Gorbachev protégé, told the recent party congress that he had not criticized political ills at the previous congress because he "clearly lacked sufficient courage." Other high-ranking political and cultural officials are making similar public admissions. Meanwhile, a mini-thaw, or relaxation, of cultural censorship is unfolding. Its main themes, according to Soviet newspapers, are "conscience and decency," as reflected in the titles of three popular plays currently running in Moscow: *The Cry*, *Speak—*, and *Dictatorship of Conscience*.

None of this means that a reformation will occur in Soviet officialdom. Clearly Gorbachev's call for official candor is a political weapon in his struggle against opposition to his power and policies; outside his personal circle, no one knows his real values and aspirations. Moreover, civic courage is hard to arouse in the Soviet system where, as Gorbachev and his supporters have openly suggested, "toadyism and servility" are rampant and most officials seem to be "virtuosos at playing it safe."

But Americans may wish to ask if the level of civic courage is so much higher in their own system, where the price is so much cheaper. The White House budget director juggles figures to please his superiors. Astronauts keep silent about safety concerns so as not to lose flight assignments. U.S. senators will not speak out against Administration foreign policies because they worry about not being re-elected. And yet, many Americans insist that to be an admirable political or cultural person in the Soviet Union a citizen must break openly with the system, abandoning all hope of a career and risking martyrdom. Rarely, if ever, do we ask so much of ourselves.

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ARTICLES.

INTO SOUTH AFRICA

The A.N.C. Is Taking Charge

STEPHEN TALBOT

Two stereotypes have hounded the African National Congress since it was banned and forced into exile twenty-six years ago by the South African government. The first, propagated mainly by the white minority regime, is that the A.N.C. is a Soviet-dominated terrorist group responsible for stage-managing virtually all the violent protest inside South Africa. The second, spread mainly by the A.N.C.'s black nationalist rivals and white liberal critics, is that the organization is a self-defeating group of stodgy Marxist ideologues who are growing old in exile and are largely irrelevant to the popular revolt in the country.

As with most stereotypes, there are grains of truth in those characterizations. The A.N.C. is allied with South Africa's small Communist Party and does receive most of its weapons from the Soviet Union. The pronouncements of A.N.C. officials in Zambia have sometimes seemed little more than rhetoric, far removed from the struggle at home.

The A.N.C. has clearly entered a new era, however, and the stereotypes have become grossly misleading. As Mike Calabrese and Mike Kendall reported in *The Nation* last fall [see "The Black Agenda for South Africa," October 26], "two bases of black resistance [that] have survived, perhaps even benefited from, the present turmoil" in South Africa are the A.N.C. and the black trade union movement. In black townships across the country, the organization is enjoying a surge in popularity. It is commonplace for thousands of blacks at rallies and at funerals to unfurl the black, green and gold A.N.C. flag, sing A.N.C. freedom songs and even distribute A.N.C. leaflets—all in open defiance of the government. It is as if the people in ghettos like Alexandra and Soweto have "unbanned" the organization Pretoria outlawed in 1960.

Moreover, the A.N.C.'s Nelson Mandela has undoubtedly become the most popular black leader in the country, much to the dismay of the white authorities, who hoped that after twenty-three years in jail he would be a forgotten man. Now they can't decide whether it is more dangerous to keep him in prison or to release him. And his wife, Winnie, has emerged as a political power in her own right, a rallying figure for black South Africans and an international symbol of resistance to apartheid. The symbolic force of Winnie Mandela's charisma, her husband's stature and the A.N.C.'s almost mythical presence as the leading national resistance movement must not be underestimated.

But more than symbolism is involved. By all accounts, the A.N.C. has greatly strengthened its underground network in South Africa since 1984. Its call last year to make the townships ungovernable, to render the apartheid system unworkable, has been remarkably successful. And this year, it has vowed to escalate the low-level guerrilla war, proclaiming 1986 the Year of Umkhonto we Sizwe (Spear of the Nation), the A.N.C.'s military wing. Already A.N.C. forces have increased the frequency of their bombings, especially in the Durban area, and on March 4 they set off an explosion inside the police security building in downtown Johannesburg.

Tempered by the frustration of twenty-six years in exile, prison or the underground, A.N.C. leaders are reluctant to boast about their resurgence. They believe it may take another decade or longer to overthrow South Africa's heavily armed white minority government. And they are painfully aware that a protracted war would destroy much of the nation's affluence and productive capacity, which they hope to preserve and extend to South Africa's exploited black majority.

Nevertheless, there is an undeniable air of cautious optimism at the A.N.C.'s headquarters in Lusaka, Zambia. Leaders of the movement believe they have seized the "strategic initiative" in their long battle with Pretoria. "The apartheid system has definitely started to crumble," A.N.C. president Oliver Tambo told me in an interview at one of the group's safe houses. "We do not know how long it will take, but the process is irreversible."

Revitalized by the thousands of young blacks who joined the organization upon fleeing South Africa after the Soweto uprisings in 1976 and 1977, and invigorated by the ongoing, spontaneous protests in South Africa since 1984, the A.N.C. leaders are pursuing a two-pronged strategy. They are intensifying direct pressure on the government through a variety of tactics, from bombings to consumer boycotts, and at the same time building alliances with everyone, from nervous white businessmen to disaffected black "homeland" leaders, who might compel President P.W. Botha to agree to negotiations.

The journey to Lusaka last year by a delegation of white businessmen, led by Gavin Relly of the Anglo-American mining corporation, to meet with the A.N.C. indicated that there were cracks in the monolithic South African establishment. It set the stage for the unveiling of the A.N.C.'s "open door" policy. Not much came out of that meeting; in fact, A.N.C. leaders expressed extreme displeasure that the business leaders had not done more to pressure the Botha administration. But since then the A.N.C. has held more productive talks with Afrikaner students and clergy, leaders of the half-million-strong Congress of South African Trade Unions, the opposition Progressive Federal Party and even

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Stephen Talbot, a producer at KQED-TV in San Francisco, recently spent a month with the A.N.C. in Zambia, Botswana and Tanzania. His documentary South Africa Under Siege *is airing nationally on public television: April 29 in New York City; May 14 in Washington.*

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Enos Mabuza, leader of the KaNgwane tribal "homeland." Such treks from South Africa to Lusaka have become so commonplace that they are no longer major news. But the significance of these talks should not be missed: a major realignment of South African politics is under way, and the A.N.C. is the catalyst.

On the military front, there is a new aggressiveness, a sharper edge, to the A.N.C.'s threats. "We mean to carry the war to the white areas," warned Ruth Mompati, a member of the organization's recently expanded executive committee. "We no longer want to confine the struggle to the townships. We are going to go to the white areas and destroy the symbols of apartheid there." For the first fifty years of its existence the A.N.C. was committed to nonviolence. After it was banned it began a sabotage campaign, but even then it bent over backward to minimize casualties, for the most part confining its attacks to hard targets such as army recruiting centers or SASOL, the government-owned coal-to-oil facility. Now the A.N.C. has made it clear that it will not be so cautious about avoiding white civilian deaths. Information director Thabo Mbeki, explained, "Our people at home are saying, 'Why is it that it's always the black mothers who are crying for their children who have been killed? When are the white mothers going to cry for their own children?'"

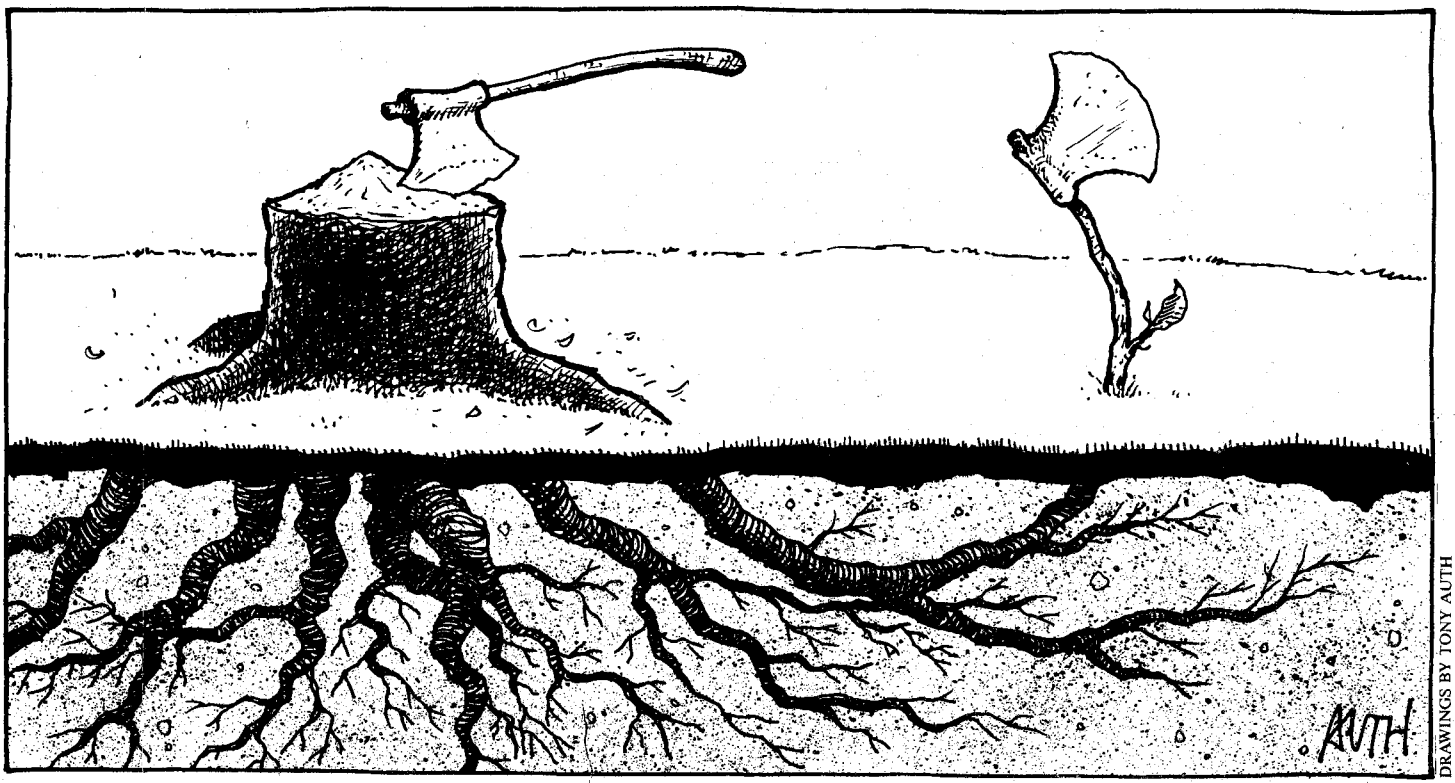
The death toll in the past year and a half stands at more than 1,400—the vast majority of them black protesters shot by the army or police. The A.N.C. is determined to escalate the fighting and increase the number of government military fatalities. If that means more white civilians killed or injured, so be it, the leaders say. In the same breath, however, they insist that they reject indiscriminate violence. "Whatever the pressure on us, we must avoid a situation where we begin to kill white civilians because they are white," Mbeki emphasized. "It would corrupt our own struggle. We would be building a force of murderers, which the following day would quite easily turn against black women and children."

One of the more extraordinary characteristics of the A.N.C. is its unwavering commitment to a nonracial policy. Some may find it unbelievable that a hardened veteran of the A.N.C. underground, a man who endured twenty months in solitary confinement in a South African prison, would argue passionately that whites must remain in South Africa to help run the country after apartheid is abolished. But that's just what Stan Mabizela, the A.N.C.'s chief representative in Tanzania, told me emphatically during a long political discussion.

"We need to go into partnership with everybody who can accept one person, one vote in South Africa," Mabizela said. "The whites of that country must stay. They have the know-how. They have run the mines and every other aspect of that highly developed economy. We'll need them if we are to avoid an economic collapse."

Mabizela's pragmatism is influenced by the example of Zimbabwe, where whites have been encouraged to stay and where the economy has generally prospered, in sharp contrast with Mozambique and Angola, whose economies have been ransacked by white flight and South Africa–sponsored war.

Although a number of Communists, including Joe Slovo, a white, occupy important positions in the A.N.C., Oliver Tambo insists they do not control it. On the contrary, he says, the A.N.C. is becoming a broad antiapartheid coalition of Marxists, Christians, socialists, liberals, well-educated middle-class professionals and young Cuban-trained militants. "It's in the interests of the A.N.C. itself that it should not be dominated by one or another of its political tendencies," Mbeki declared. "It should not be a Commu-



DRAWINGS BY TONY AUTH

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nist Party, a Christian Democratic Party or a Social Democratic Party. It must unite all of those political tendencies around the objective of getting a democratic South Africa."

After apartheid is eliminated, A.N.C. leaders say, they will try to establish a multiparty system of government allowing free expression and sharp political debate. "By ourselves I think we would not be able to rule that country," Mabizela acknowledged. "But we can lead in terms of ideas. And so when we one day return to South Africa, we will enter into a coalition, a working relationship with all the progressive people who are there."

The officials are generally conciliatory toward rival black groups in South Africa. They told me they were certain they could work with the Azanian People's Organization, the militant black nationalist group composed mainly of intellectuals. "We talk with them often and basically we share the same goals," Mbeki said, although he criticized the organization for harassing Senator Edward Kennedy during his tour of South Africa last year and warned that police provocateurs have infiltrated the group.

There is, however, one rival to whom the A.N.C.'s policy of cooperation does not apply: Zulu chief Gatsha Buthelezi. "He is a salaried employee of the South African state and a man who has ordered his followers to attack members of the United Democratic Front and other progressives," Mbeki said sharply. "When you're dealing with Buthelezi, you're dealing with someone who really is on the other side."

"In the A.N.C. we oppose tribalism," Mabizela added. "Today we have one name for ourselves; we call ourselves blacks. Now I know that there is a little chief in Zululand who is trying to rally his people along tribal lines because he has failed politically, failed mainly because he made the mistake of collaborating with the system. But the people don't want him, even the majority of the Zulus. They are going to turn against him. They'll kill him."

As the revolt against apartheid spreads, Pretoria is lashing out against neighboring countries that harbor A.N.C. activists and guerrillas. The group's officials admit that this will make it more difficult to smuggle arms into the country, but it will not quell the uprising. "Besides, our people in the country are stealing weapons on a much greater scale from the police and army, and we encourage that," Tambo said.

The A.N.C. does not claim to be in direct control of the ongoing rebellion in South Africa, but it does appear to be playing a significant role in arming, shaping and directing that struggle. And for the first time in its long exile, the organization is beginning to see an array of forces take shape—politicized black trade unions and ghetto youth, international sanctions, divisions among the white establishment—that will ultimately destroy apartheid.

Ironically, the South African government may become the victim of its own propaganda about the A.N.C. By refusing to negotiate with A.N.C. "terrorists," Botha guarantees that the revolution in South Africa will be bloodier and more radical. If South Africa's Nationalist Party were not blind to the point of self-destructiveness, it would immediately release Mandela and begin negotiations with the A.N.C., before it is too late—before everything goes up in flames—and it is left to deal with opponents more extreme than the A.N.C. and not committed to a multiracial, democratic South Africa. □

NORTH CAROLINA PRIMARY

Trouble in Jesse Helms Country

FERREL GUILLORY

Meet Coy Privette. Baptist minister, Republican state legislator, executive director of the Christian Action League, he would seem to be Senator Jesse Helms's kind of guy. Indeed, in 1984 Privette stirred up a furor in Baptist circles by giving the Helms re-election campaign access to a mailing list of church leaders.

In this year's race for the Republican nomination for the U.S. Senate, however, he hasn't fallen in line with the Helms political organization. His defection symbolizes the current split in the state G.O.P., a rift which could translate into a major setback for Helms in the May 6 primary. Instead of backing Helms's candidate, David Funderburk, Privette, a smiling, loquacious preacher from the cotton-mill town of Kannapolis, supports the candidacy of U.S. Representative James Broyhill, a twenty-three-year veteran of the House.

Senator John East, who suffers from a thyroid disorder, is not seeking a second term. In an effort to maintain its hold on North Carolina's second Senate seat, the National Congressional Club, the hub of the Helms organization, recruited Funderburk and is managing his campaign.

Funderburk is a 41-year-old professor of government and head of the social sciences department at Campbell University, a small Baptist institution in Buies Creek, thirty miles south of Raleigh. In 1978 he wrote a book titled *If the Blind Lead the Blind: The Scandal Regarding the Mis-teaching of Communism in American Universities*. Sponsored by Helms, Funderburk was appointed U.S. Ambassador to Rumania in 1981. After three and a half years at the post he resigned, blasting the State Department for downplaying human rights violations and for not standing up to the government in Bucharest.

Broyhill, 58, is a member of a furniture-making family well-known in the state and the closest thing North Carolina has to a Mr. Republican. A low-key, methodical legislator, he is the ranking Republican on the House Energy and Commerce Committee. The Broyhill-Funderburk contest is the latest struggle between the two main factions of the state Republican Party. In journalistic shorthand, the state G.O.P. is usually described as being split between moderates and conservatives. In fact, the cleavage is between the con-

Ferrel Guillory is associate editor of The News and Observer *of Raleigh, North Carolina.*

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servatives and the ultraconservatives. Broyhill, along with Governor James G. Martin, represents the South's old-line Republican Party. It is a pragmatic, fiscally conservative Republicanism, with its base in the Appalachians and in the suburbs of Sun Belt cities. In contrast, Helms, East and the Congressional Club represent the Republican right wing, mixed in with switchovers from the Democratic Party and politicized Christian fundamentalists.

With a solid following among Republican regulars, Broyhill appears well positioned to win the May 6 primary. Helms has declared himself neutral in the race, but the Funderburk campaign is clearly controlled by his organization. Therefore, a Broyhill victory would signal a diminution of Helms's power in the state G.O.P.

Republicans have won the past three Senate elections in North Carolina, a state once dominated by the Democratic Party and long noted for its progressive leadership in the South. Following Helms's defeat of Governor James B. Hunt Jr. in the fierce 1984 Senate race, state Democrats began a process of party renewal. After drifting for several months without a candidate to rally around, the party establishment encouraged Terry Sanford, former governor and former president of Duke University, to run. The fact that the Democrats turned to the 68-year-old Sanford suggests to Thad Beyle, a professor of political science at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, that the party has a "generation gap" in its leadership. "Where is that group between 40 and 60?" Beyle asks.

Nine other candidates have entered the Democratic primary, most of them political unknowns. Sanford's stiffest challenge may come from former Insurance Commissioner John R. Ingram, a freewheeling pol who lost to Helms in the 1978 Senate race and who describes himself as a "populist, progressive conservative." Other entrants include Ted Kinney, a Fayetteville real estate agent who is running with the backing of some Jesse Jackson supporters to give the state's blacks leverage; T.L. "Fountain" Odom, a Mecklenburg County commissioner who offers himself as a fresh-faced Democrat; and William Belk, whose family owns a chain of department stores in the state.

Sanford remains the front-runner, but he must overcome the voters' perception that he is a figure of the past. Once listed as one of the twentieth century's ten best governors, by George C. Weeks, then the chief of staff to Michigan Governor William Milliken, Sanford still commands considerable respect in the state. In 1972, however, he lost the North Carolina presidential primary to Alabama Governor George Wallace, and in 1976 he made another short-lived race for the presidency. If his candidacy falters, it would deal another blow to the state's moderately progressive Democratic establishment.

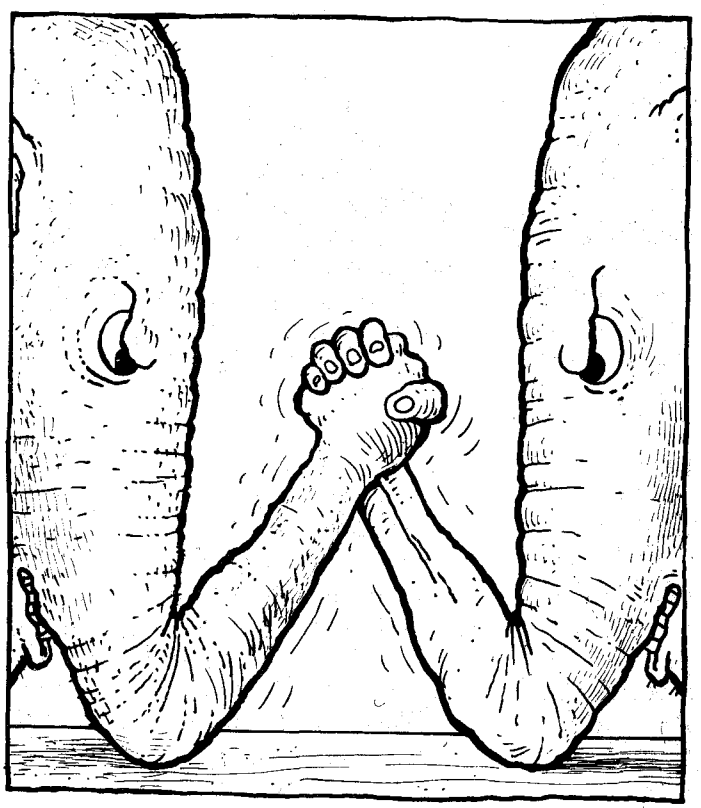
Many prominent Democratic figures passed up the Senate race largely because of the tone and tactics of past campaigns conducted by the Helms political organization. U.S. Representative Charles G. Rose 3d said he didn't want to subject himself to a "chain-saw attack" from the Congressional Club. Hunt, who endured a twenty-month assault on his character and record in the 1984 race with Helms, declined to run again after polls showed a lingering hostility to his moderate-to-liberal views.

Surveys for Hunt and other Democrats conducted in the past year by Hickman-Maslin Research Inc. of Washington found that white voters in the state are more willing to express racist attitudes than they were in the recent past. Asked whether they regularly agreed with black leaders, only 13 percent of white voters in one poll said yes, while 71 percent said they differed most of the time. Asked for their opinion on the proposition that blacks are less intelligent than whites, 30 percent agreed strongly and 19 percent leaned toward agreement. Fifty-four percent said they believed the Bible provides guidance for political decisions.

In pushing Funderburk's candidacy, the Helms organization is resorting to familiar tactics. The basic Helmsian campaign features fliers and television commercials with unflattering photographs of opponents, the use of racial cues to imply a candidate is pro-black and, above all, the depiction of its own candidate as the carrier of the torch of true conservatism.

A Funderburk television spot asserts that "the official *Congressional Record* documents that Jim Broyhill was the only North Carolina Republican to vote for Tip O'Neill's big-spending budget." A fund-raising letter points out that Broyhill voted to establish the Federal holiday honoring the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr.; it says, "North Carolina Republicans have a clear choice—do they want a Helms conservative, or a Republican Senator who would vote for the Martin Luther King holiday?" The Funderburk campaign accuses Broyhill of voting "in favor of tax-funded abortions 14 times."

In response, the Broyhill campaign has produced a television commercial describing the Representative as the genuine "conservative choice." His record leaves no doubt



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of his conservative credentials and his commitment to basic big-business Republicanism. He regularly scores about 70 in the U.S. Chamber of Commerce ratings, and *Congressional Quarterly* has placed him in the "conservative coalition" on more than 80 percent of the votes over the past decade. Americans for Democratic Action gave Broyhill a score of 15 in its latest ratings.

Those scores help explain why the Funderburk campaign's depiction of Broyhill as an opponent of conservatism lacks plausibility, and why people like Coy Privette have turned away from the Helms candidate. "The negative ads have had a backlash," Privette says. Moreover, in Privette's case, Broyhill endorsed his run for state legislator and made appearances in his behalf. He has also shown up at Lincoln Day dinners and other Republican gatherings for more than two decades. "He's been to their dinners," says Privette. "He's eaten barbecue with 'em. He's eaten chicken with 'em. He's fellowshiped with 'em."

Funderburk, who has never held a major elective office, can't match Broyhill's contacts with Republicans who have long toiled in their counties and precincts. And yet, with the resources of Helms's Congressional Club behind him, his strength should not be underestimated. Republicans now have 807,563 registrants, more than a quarter of all registered voters in North Carolina, up about 220,000 since the 1976 primary in which Ronald Reagan, backed by the Helms organization, defeated Gerald Ford. In addition to the normal party growth among suburbanites and immigrants from Northern states, the G.O.P. has received a significant influx from the registration campaigns in fundamentalist churches. Those added as many as 50,000 voters sympathetic to Helms's politics. Since fewer than half of all registered Republicans are likely to vote in the primary, these neophytes could play a decisive role. The Rev. H. Lamarr Mooneyham, a Baptist minister who coordinated the 1984 registration campaign as a staffer for the Rev. Jerry Falwell's Moral Majority, has spoken out for Funderburk.

At the outset of his candidacy, Funderburk almost spoiled his campaign's effort to draw a sharp ideological distinction between himself and Broyhill. In an interview with a wire service reporter, Funderburk said he believed abortion was morally wrong but added, "I still think that every individual has to draw his own conclusion, and as an individual who believes in freedom of choice in a democratic society, my own view is that it's something we shouldn't impose on other people." That interview jolted antiabortion forces, and Funderburk quickly restated his position: "Right now I certainly favor a constitutional amendment to ban abortions," he told reporters at a G.O.P. rally at Emerald Island. Broyhill opposes abortion except in cases of rape, incest or a threat to the life of the mother.

Regardless of Senator Helms's declaration of neutrality, he and his political forces have a high stake in the outcome of the Funderburk-Broyhill contest. In the selection of the Republican Party's post-Reagan leadership, Helms obviously would want to play a role, either by backing a presidential candidate or by running himself in the developing Southern regional primary. A Funderburk victory would reinforce the power of the Helms forces in his home state.

Helms has indicated he will back Broyhill if he is the party's nominee, but a Broyhill triumph would surely affect the Helms forces' ability to maneuver in state and presidential politics. Neither Broyhill nor Governor Martin would necessarily line up with the kind of right-wing candidacy Helms would favor. Helms would face competing power centers in the party. If Broyhill can hold enough of the Coy Privettes of the Republican Party to win on May 6, Helmsian politics may receive a serious blow—administered, ironically, by a conservative Republican. □

Progressive

(*Continued From Front Cover*)

few months of a recession, what do the progressives have to offer? And what specifically does that wing of the Democratic Party suggest in the area that was, for more than a half-century, the base of Democratic political power—economic and social policy? Reagan's victory in 1980 was, in considerable measure, a result of the Carter Administration's failure in this sector, a signal of the demise of popular confidence in the Democrats' ability to run the economy. "Back to Jimmy Carter"—in other words, back to an exhausted and timid liberalism followed by a tentative conservatism—is not serious politics. Neither is the neoliberal project of building a second Republican Party that is more enlightened than the original model.

Where do we go from here?

My answer, of necessity, will be elementary and schematic. Keynesian liberalism of the 1960s, the A B C's of the democratic left, no longer works as it once did; we now have to go back to basics in order to move forward. For reasons of space I will focus on domestic economic and social policy. In critiquing the Reagan tactic of achieving growth through inequity, and in offering positive proposals for planning, reducing working time, making the tax system fairer and increasing the social wage, I will be talking about practical ways to bring forth a rebirth of economic justice in the United States.

Let us assume for the purposes of argument that Reagan is right and that the United States turned a corner with the recovery of 1983, entering a new cycle of growth and job generation with merely minor ups and downs. Progressives, unprefixed liberals, democratic socialists—the democratic left—must clearly argue that such a recovery is unacceptable because the nature of economic growth and work have so changed that a rising gross national product no longer has the positive social impact that it did two decades ago.

In the forty-second month of the Reagan recovery, this

Michael Harrington, co-chair of Democratic Socialists of America, will convene the New Directions Conference from May 2 through 4 at the Washington Convention Center, where many of the ideas outlined in this article will be discussed.

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country has an unemployment rate that ten years ago would have indicated a deep recession. Despite 6.5 percent real growth in 1984, the highest rate since 1951, the percentage of Americans living in poverty remains what it was in the mid-1960s. As a result, in the midst of "good times," homelessness and hunger are on the increase. Perhaps most scandalous, children are the most disadvantaged single age group, and women and minority groups suffer disproportionately.

Inequality has been on the rise partly because of structural changes in the economy; partly because of Reagan's reactionary redistribution of income and wealth, originating with the 1981 tax act; and partly because of a savage attack on trade unions, intended to boost profits and lower wages. Meanwhile, average citizens have been able to maintain their consumption only by going deeper in debt. The corporations themselves make wasteful "investments" in mergers and acquisitions, and as a consequence, more and more giant companies become, as *Business Week* puts it, "hollow"—that is, brokers for and assemblers of products manufactured outside the United States.

This jerry-built economic contraption, subsidized by hundreds of billions of dollars in military expenditures that threaten the existence of the planet, led to a demand-side, inequitable Keynesian recovery in 1983. The President immediately claimed that the revival vindicated supply-side theory, but in fact it disproved it. In addition the recovery reveals new, socially problematic aspects of growth. The rising tide of the G.N.P. lifts the yachts and the cabin cruisers but not the outboards and the rowboats. We live in a time in which a speculative stock market soars and business school graduates with no practical experience are hired at $50,000 a year, while in a bankrupt steel town in Pennsylvania the people have to boil their drinking water because there are no municipal funds to fix the sewage system.

A more modest version of this contradiction between affluence and squalor contributed to the social unrest of the 1960s. The democratic left should not wait for another recession to revive it or to relieve it of the task of thinking through a new program.

From the New Deal to the Great Society the democratic left expressed the dominant ideology of the Democratic Party and the nation: that social justice was a means to economic growth, that the moral course was also a productive one, financing itself out of the very growth that it induced. That equation was a political and economic success for more than three decades, but then, around the beginning of the 1970s, it broke down. The reasons for that failure, although too complex to analyze here, include inflation triggered by the unconscionable war in Vietnam; increased competition for U.S. business from Europe and Japan, whose war-ravaged economies had been rebuilt, providing an economic stimulus for this country; the emergence of the multinational corporation; the shift to service industries and the related automation and mechanization of manufacturing; the "maturing" of domestic markets for consumer durables like television sets and automobiles; the impact of social movements against racism and sexism as well as the new environmental regulations.

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In 1973 the Republican Party announced the ideological theme that has dominated America ever since: that social justice causes inefficiency and economic stagnation, and that it is therefore in the interest of society to subsidize the investments of the rich rather than the consumption of the poor and the middle class. As we have seen, the supply-side recipe for trickle-down prosperity did not work. Inflation was killed with the meat cleaver of monetarism, which brought the auto and construction industries to their knees, helped create an agricultural depression that continues to this day and exacerbated the debt problems of the non-oil-producing Third World countries in ways that still might upend the global economy.

Indeed, the capital goods industries, which were supposed to benefit from the "investment-led" recovery, lost about half of their market to Europe, Japan and South Korea, in part because of the overvalued dollar, which was a consequence of monetarist policies. But the frightening escalation of the arms race, the increased income of the corporate rich and the lowered real wages of the working people did generate what *The Economist* called "Keynesianism by mistake." That led to a perverse kind of recovery: the "good times" were created at intolerable costs and with unacceptable results. So even if a recession does not occur, it is urgent that the democratic left formulate its alternatives. The "Reaganism with a human face" of the neoliberals is not good enough under the best of circumstances and certainly not under the present ones.

I have no idea which of the many time bombs ticking away in the U.S. economy will explode: the internal debt, the international debt, underconsumption by working people leading to overproduction or the shattering of the yuppie myth when it turns out that there simply aren't enough lucrative jobs for the hyperexpectations of the Baby Boomers. I am convinced that the tumultuous structural changes of our times—the dramatic redefinition of the global division of labor, the technological revolution and the internationalization of capital—as well as the old-fashioned business cycle, will bring the Reagan house of cards down around the nation's ears. In such a world the solutions that the left proposed in the 1960s are no longer practical.

So let us assume that the Reagan doctrine that inequality is the royal road to economic progress has been dispelled by the brutal facts of life. What proposals should the democratic left offer?

A new, qualitative definition of full employment is one. When in the first draft of their excellent pastoral letter the Catholic bishops advocated bringing the joblessness rate down to between 3 and 4 percent, they were simply reiterating the moderate liberal goal that was the official target of the Kennedy Administration in 1961. William Simon and Michael Novak, premier spokesmen for the preferential option for the rich, jumped on the bishops for that economic heresy, and for once they had a point. Full employment is now a radical demand, going far beyond anything the New Deal called for. But none of our problems can be solved if we do not take the leap.

Qualitative full employment has two principal components. First, it is simply not true, as the experience of the past five years has demonstrated in painful measure, that economic growth by itself will improve the lot of the poor, minority groups and women. On the contrary, growth has harmful effects on precisely the people in greatest need. To translate rather clumsily from the Swedish, there must be a "solidaristic" full employment, designed to raise the living standard of everyone, but especially of those at the bottom. How can it be done?

The minimum wage has been declining in real terms and as a percentage of the average wage for years. Therefore the conservative charge that it is the primary cause of minority unemployment is false. Worse, the law has not been enforced, which is why sweatshops are able to exploit undocumented immigrants in the United States. The government could deal with this problem by guaranteeing a job to everyone who wants to work—a useful job, both for the individual and society—at, say, $5 an hour. No company in the private sector would therefore be able to pay less than that; the minimum wage would be self-policing. Not incidentally, a hike in the minimum wage would have a positive impact on the wages of everyone else. Such a policy would improve the lot not only of the poor, minority groups and women but of all working people. And it would deal with the potential for an underconsumption crisis built into the economy by the inequities of the Reagan recovery.

To be sure, a higher minimum wage would be counterproductive if the rest of the economy were left unchanged. It would price a whole stratum of marginal jobs out of the market. That is why we need an integrated plan; piecemeal solutions will not work at a time of profound transition.

That leads to the second aspect of the policy I am proposing: it must be envisioned as the potential source of a tremendous increase in productivity in American society. One of the most perverse aspects of the present recovery is that it has not been accompanied by the "normal" productivity increases that have characterized past periods of growth. But how can raising the minimum wage and promoting social justice enhance productivity? I turn to corporate America for part of the answer.

Big business in the United States understands that the present transfer of traditional mass production to factories in the Third World requires a reorganization of work in this country. When the manufacturing sector was dominated by huge, carefully programmed machines making enormous batches of standardized goods, management wanted docile, unimaginative workers who presumably would not join unions. But with complex technology and the pressures of foreign competition, corporate managers now talk about adopting quality circles and "Japanese methods" to get more worker input into production. They have suddenly realized that the people whom they used to call the hired hands have brains, which management desperately needs.

But in the fascination with Japanese participatory methods of production, one small detail is glossed over: male employees in large Japanese companies are guaranteed jobs for life. They can afford to improve productivity because

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the new techniques will not cost them their jobs. A high-wage, full-employment, guaranteed-job strategy with equal pay for women is thus not an act of noblesse oblige but a way of improving productivity. As Lester Thurow points out in *The Zero Sum Solution*, during World War II there was a huge influx of inexperienced workers into the war plants, many of them women and blacks getting their first decent jobs. According to the conventional wisdom, productivity should have taken a dive; instead it soared, because the workers were motivated by patriotism and protected by a full-employment economy. Qualitative full employment is a way to make the economy more efficient as well as more just.

But where will the jobs come from? Should Washington allocate work within the framework of some central plan? Of course not. That would be a blueprint for disaster.

Productive work can be created, first of all, by granting subsidies to private corporations. In Reaganite economics billions of dollars in tax and other subsidies are given to the rich in the hope that they will invest in plants, new machines and the like. The rich, in turn, speculate or invest in hollow corporations, which do not stimulate productivity, or in automation, which throws workers out of jobs. Indeed, tax subsidies are one of the main causes of the stratospheric deficit; the government is underwriting corporate waste. The left should propose providing handsome tax subsidies only to corporations that create jobs in areas of high unemployment. Every other subsidy should be repealed.

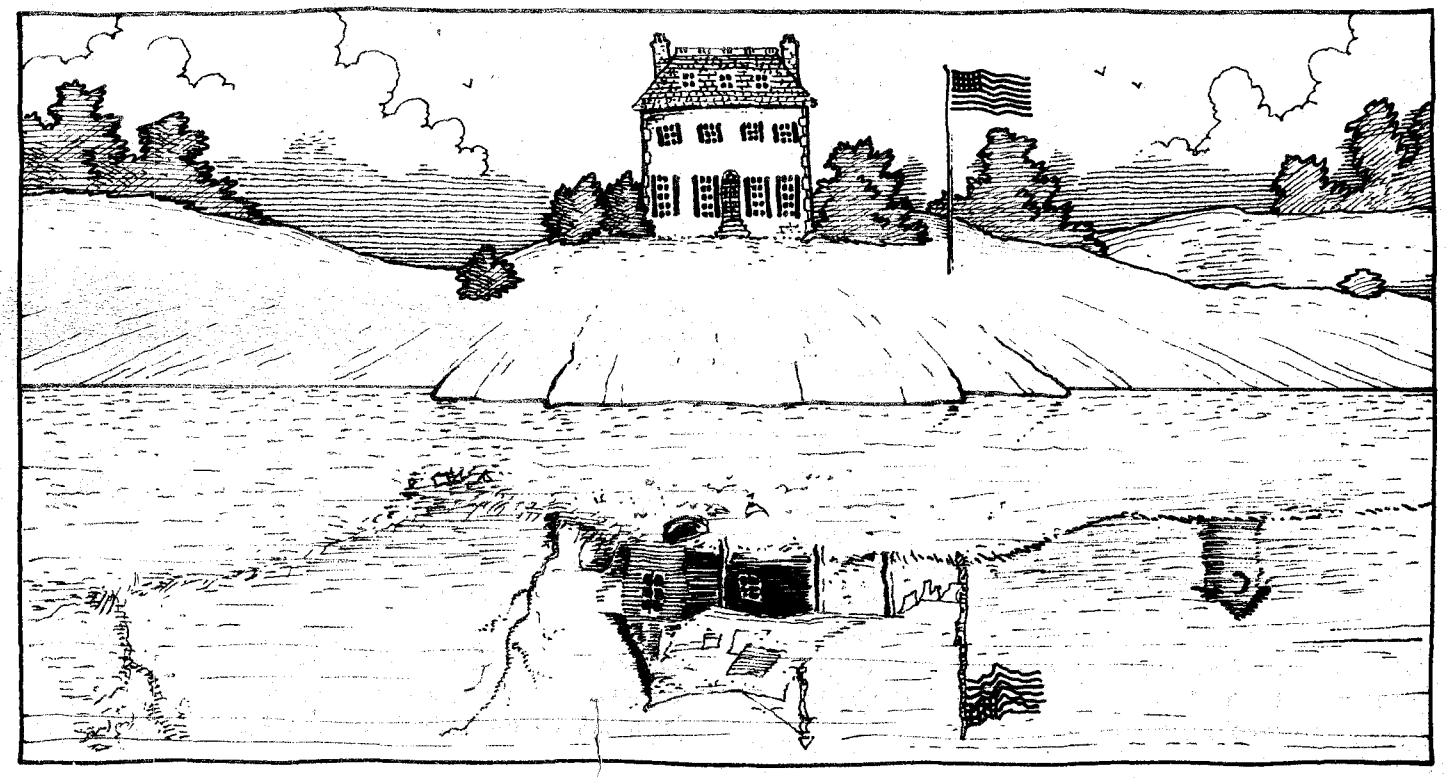
In addition, there should be a decentralized expansion of the public sector to rebuild the nation's deteriorating infrastructure—roads, bridges, parks, housing. Rather than sell the Conrail system, which became profitable because the Federal government bought the wrecked Penn Central and restored it to working order, the government should commit itself to building a rail system that would create jobs, save energy and reduce auto pollution. Such a system would pay for itself just as any intelligent investment does.

More broadly, the democratic left must defend the public sector, not as a panacea (which it certainly is not) but as an important tool of economic and social policy. The current drive to privatize jails, hospitals, trash collection and much else is motivated by equal parts of greed and fanatic ideological hatred of the public sector. The New York City scandals and the Pentagon's outrageous tolerance of General Dynamics' criminal fraud on military contracts are examples of the evils that privatization can bring.

Yet the mere expansion of the public sector and the granting of tax subsidies to corporations based solely on the performance of socially useful work do not constitute a truly *qualitative* program for growth. Here, again, we can learn from corporate methods.

Some U.S. companies are committed to giving the appearance of worker participation in decision-making through employee stock-ownership plans. But ESOPs should properly be called MESOPs—management enrichment stock ownership plans. Corporate America takes the tax subsidies it gets for setting up such programs but doesn't allow workers a real voice in running the company. Nevertheless, in the first phase of even the phony plans there is usually a rise in productivity, which suggests what true workplace democracy could achieve.

At a time of rapid technological change, in which the division of international labor is being transformed, the democratic left should insist on employee participation in corporate decisions that have a profound impact on communities. It should advocate worker and community participation not only as matters of democratic justice but also as means of increased productivity. That requires a new kind of public



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NATION REPRINTS

The Selling of Miss Liberty

The article that broke the story. Roberta Brandes Gratz and Eric Fettmann reveal how major corporations, under the direction of Lee Iacocca, took over the statue restoration for publicity and profit, mismanaged the project and excluded the American public. *(November 7, 1985)*

K.A.L. 007: What the U.S. Knew And When We Knew It

This issue raises serious questions about the U.S. role in the downing of Korean Air Lines Flight 007. Author David Pearson's study argues that U.S. authorities at the highest level knew the airliner was off course much earlier than they have admitted, and that the questions raised by the official versions of the story can only be resolved by a Congressional inquiry. *(August 18/25, 1984)*

K.A.L. 007: Unanswered Questions

This issue brings our 1984 report up to date. With contributions by David Pearson, John Keppel and David Corn, it is the culmination of an intensive investigation. The authors analyze new Japanese radar data, discuss a Nation Institute–sponsored review, by aviation experts, of the final airline transmission and describe the government's efforts to obstruct investigation. *(August 17/24, 1985)*

Central America

This special issue on Central America offers a strong refutation of Reagan Administration views. Highlighted by Walter LaFeber's overview, William LeoGrande's analysis of the domestic political fallout and Peter Davis's compelling firsthand report on the Nicaraguan revolution, the issue is one of the most urgent, informative and important in *The Nation*'s history. *(January 28, 1984)*

Reflections on a Glass House: The U.N. at 40

Nine scholars and activists provide an examination of the United Nation's achievements and failures. They assess the organization's role in disarmament, Middle East negotiations and in relations between the developed countries and the Third World. A much-needed rebuttal to U.N. opponents' arguments. *(September 21, 1985)*

The Education Wars

Teachers, education watchers, journalists and scholars join forces to retake much of the ground recently occupied by Reagan's National Commission on Excellence in Education. With its healthy mix of policy issues and practical matters, "The Education Wars" is indispensable to anyone with a stake in the continuing battle over our schools. *(May 25, 1985)*

Many Bhopals: Technology Out of Control

Robert Engler reveals that the dangerous dependence on pesticides and the movement away from people-intensive agriculture results from corporate profit-making strategies. The Bhopal disaster is one of countless poisonings occurring each year, here and in the Third World, under an irresponsible scientific-corporate elite. *(April 27, 1985)*

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sector, one which is unbureaucratic and locally controlled.

Recently, I was in the Pittsburgh area talking with members of the United Steelworkers and the United Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers who are active in the Tri-State Conference on Steel. In seeking an economic revival in the region, they do not propose to force the corporations to keep their factories open. Rather, they call on local governments, in cooperation with the existing work force, to use the power of eminent domain to acquire the plants and operate them as social property. They recognize the need for innovation and change, but they are convinced that this can be achieved with enthusiastic worker and community participation.

Although the New Deal made the greatest strides toward social justice in American history, it did not question the autocratic decision-making process of the corporate board room. The government would get the economy moving again by macroeconomic policies that provided guaranteed markets for private-sector industries, but the basic decisions would continue to be made in the old way. As the preceding analysis has made clear, however, reliance on the automatic virtues of gross economic growth no longer makes sense. The democratic left must put forth policies that make the economy more dynamic by making the workplace more democratic.

There is a related demand. One of the greatest sources of economic progress, beginning with the British "ten hours" law in the middle of the nineteenth century, has been the reduction in working time. One hundred years ago the American Federation of Labor began its campaign for the eight-hour day; forty-eight years ago the New Deal adopted the forty-hour week. Now it is time to put the thirty-five- or thirty-hour week on the national agenda.

There are a number of practical reasons for reducing the workweek. It will spread jobs around; it will give workers spare time in which to re-educate themselves so they can adapt to rapidly changing technology and occupational structures; it will yield increased productivity. But we mean thirty-five hours of work for forty hours' pay. We are not calling for work sharing, which lowers wages, but for fewer hours at the same pay for a labor force that works harder and longer than any in the Western world.

However, the corporations should not be made to bear the increased labor costs by themselves. A sudden rise of that magnitude in the private sector's wage bill would have disastrous consequences. Therefore, the left should support a plan in which a portion of the wage increases would take the form of added leisure time rather than more money, and another portion would consist of tax reductions under a truly progressive tax code. The total would add up to forty hours' pay, but part of the amount would be subsidized by society on the grounds that the resulting increased productivity and reduced unemployment represents a social savings. That leads to another radical notion that has been around a long time: taxation based on the ability to pay. In 1984 the Congressional Budget Office projected a decline of $1,100 in the real income of American families making less than $10,000 a year over the period from 1983 to 1985, and an increase of $24,270 in the income of families earning more than $80,000 a year—all as a result of the taxation and

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spending policies of the Reagan Administration. The Democratic Party should repeal every single Reagan tax cut for the upper-middle class and the rich that does not generate jobs and income for people at the bottom of society. The Reaganites have conned the nation and even some liberal Democrats into believing that Federal tax policy prior to 1981 reduced growth by promoting social justice. The Federal government is now subsidizing the wasteful spending of the rich in the name of fighting largely nonexistent wasteful spending for the poor.

There is another critically important source of funds, but here the left must proceed cautiously. We are not for reducing military spending because we do not care about national security while Ronald Reagan does. We do not advocate helping the poor even if it means turning our backs on the preservation of this society's democratic freedoms. But we must oppose Reagan's insane military priorities. Star Wars, the MX missile and the attempt to overthrow Nicaragua's government have nothing to do with the defense of this country. Disarmament and support for liberation movements in the Third World are in the interest of national security. Put in that context, we should propose massive but quite specific cuts in the military budget and an accelerated program for global disarmament.

That leads to an idea passionately championed by the late Swedish Prime Minister, Olof Palme: big-power disarmament should be used to free up money for a gigantic program to promote economic justice in the Third World. Many Americans, particularly many industrial workers, think economic development in poor countries means unemployment at home. To some extent it has, because the "progress" has been made under the aegis of irresponsible multinationals that pit Third World and First World workers against each other. Just development of the poor countries could open up vast markets for U.S. products and create jobs at home.

Thus far I have focused on a solidaristic and internationalist way to increase pay and productivity through an emphasis on qualitative growth. What about the "social wage"? What about assistance to those not in the labor market—the severely disabled, the nearly 15 percent of the aging who are poor, the growing population of those, disproportionately women, over 80 years of age? More broadly, half the mothers of babies are now in the paid labor market out of economic necessity, meaning there is a greater need for child care. In effect, the overwhelming majority of women hold two jobs, one at home and one in the work force, and should be compensated accordingly.

Compensating these groups would not be simply a matter of equity; in most cases it would create jobs and promote productivity. And think of the unemployed steel or auto worker who has lost his or her health insurance because the United States is the only country in the industrialized world without a national health plan. Think of the AIDS victim who could benefit from greatly increased research. These commitments can be honored only if there are the full-employment resources that economically and politically permit such decency.

Finally, the democratic left cannot be content to draw up a shopping list. We used to say, Social justice is good for all. Then Nixon and Reagan persuaded the nation that social injustice is good for all, a proposition that has turned out to be patent nonsense. Yet let us give Ronald Reagan his due: he is not afraid to be radical or idealistic, to call for departures and to speak the language of patriotism. We should present our ideas not as the lowest common denominator of the needs of the different constituencies of the Democratic Party but as a vision of a truly new America in a more just world, as a way toward a qualitative growth that will benefit all Americans and the rest of the globe as well, and bring about a rebirth of justice on the eve of the twenty-first century. □

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Politics From A Different Position

PEACE IN THE MIDDLE EAST
Part III—The Color Green

In March, 1935 Hitler tore up the Treaty of Versailles by bringing conscription back to Germany. By this act he in effect abrogated World War I, the war that was to end all wars, and so laid the foundation for World War II. A year later he marched into the Rhineland and began to remilitarize it. What did the governments of England and France do about these acts? They found fault not with Hitler, but with the Treaty of Versailles. They even negotiated with Hitler, signed treaties with him. Did any person of knowledge fail to understand what Hitler was planning to do? Everyone knew. The evidence was quite clear. What the Germans were doing was no secret to anyone. Why did the leaders of England and France fail to act in time?

Leaders in democracies have yet to learn that a crime committed against anyone is a crime against everyone. Criminal behavior does not correct itself. When governments begin to commit crimes by abrogating unilaterally agreements made with other governments the consequences lead to war. Those governments who are the victims of breached agreements must therefore take immediate action against the criminals. Delay is fatal. If the dead were able to complain, those in charge of our destiny, our government leaders, would be more prone to act more decisively. The leaders would be interested in protecting themselves. Unfortunately for mankind, the dead do not complain, so our leaders can very often get away with murder.

The most serious danger spot in the world today is the Middle East. Many believe that the Middle East was the cradle of civilization. It could become the burial ground of mankind. It is the only place in the world where three fantasy worlds commingle: Judaism, Christianity, Islam. Fantasy worlds are not the substance for harmonious commingling. These three were born in violence and have lived in violence through history. Most of the committed are first millenium people. For the benefit of those who have not read the previous articles in this series I shall redefine first millennium people. These are people who, although they live in the twentieth century, have minds that hark back a thousand years, that is, to the first millennium, the time when the earth was flat, when the sun revolved around the earth, when the earth was the center of the universe, when heaven was "above" and hell was "below," and God sat on his throne meting out justice to mankind. (I put *above* and *below* in quotation marks because these words are anthropomorphic projections. There are no aboves and belows in the solar system. Our *below* is to the people in Argentina their *above*.)

The vast majority of the people of the world are first millennium people. Around the globe they live separately, but in the Middle East they live close together. Therein lies the danger. When people are committed to fundamental beliefs they will not surrender them. They would rather kill than surrender them. History fully supports this thesis. The use of reason and logic, or even money, as tools to achieve harmony must fail. How does one successfully apply reason, logic, money to fantasy?

In precise terms the basic issue in the Middle East is Israel. The followers of Islam want to destroy Israel. That is their goal. There should be no illusion about that. Israel does not wish to be destroyed. It will do all it can not to allow itself to be destroyed. And it can do a great deal. Let us not forget that the Israelis are Jews and throughout history many attempts have been made to destroy them. The Christians tried to destroy them; Hitler tried to destroy them; and now Islam wants to destroy them. Therein lies the seeds of World War III. And should that occur there no longer would be any history.

Symbols play an important role not only in the lives of first millennium people, but among human beings generally. Hitler's propagandists were well aware of the power of symbols and how to use them to turn a civi-

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lized people into murderers. One example of the symbol was the swastika, an ancient symbol which in Sanskrit means well-being, that is to say that the one who wears this symbol will be blessed. During Hitler's time every German wore a newly formed modified version of this symbol. The first step to mass paranoia is to be identified with a symbol.

Judith Miller in a special report to The New York Times of Sunday, January 19 of this year writes, "An earnest young man in olive green military fatigues addressed a People's Congress meeting last week. 'America can threaten us,' he told the crowd, whose chanting often drowned out his diatribe. 'America can terrorize,' he pressed on. 'But nothing, nothing can stop the green mind.' "

Miss Miller continues to tell us how in Libya everything is green: the buildings are decorated with green shades and shutters; Libya's flag is green; the license plates are green; the Green Square, Tripoli's main square is paved in green-tinted cement. "The three slender volumes in which Col. Muammar el-Qaddafi, the Libyan leader, outlines his eccentric vision of Islamic utopia are called the Green books," writes Miss Miller. Green is the color of Islam and Qaddafi has a purpose in making everything around him green. He is fast becoming the voice of Islam. His picture is everywhere in Libya. He has the symbol. He has the book. He has the people. He has the storm troopers. The groundwork for World War III is being laid.

Our government is organizing to treat terror with terror. As ever before we are going to treat the symptom, not the cause.

When Hitler began to build his thousand year Reich, the great political leaders of the world called him crazy!

(To be continued)

Sex From A Different Position

CYRUS BASS

If you find **POLITICS FROM A DIFFERENT POSITION** interesting, you will find **SEX FROM A DIFFERENT POSITION** more interesting.

SEX FROM A DIFFERENT POSITION by Cyrus Bass is a most unusual book unique in publishing history. The title is eisegetical. It immediately makes one think of pornography. But the book is everything *except* that. The book is about sex but it is not a sex book by any means. It is a book about human life: the way we think, the way we behave, the way we love and hate, the way we build and destroy and it explains the whys – the whys we love, hate, kill, have wars. The explanations are different from what has been written about human behavior by others. Why then the title? The author wants to demonstrate that when we hear the word sex immediately most of us think of the physical act. But the book is not about sex in the physical sense. The book is literally about sex from a different position.

The author, a practicing clinical psychologist for many years, charts an orientation on how to live in health and happiness which is fundamentally different from what we have been led to believe about sickness and health. His theories about illness in general and about cancer and schizophrenia in particular, if proven to be correct, may well revolutionize the practice of medicine. Dr. Bass is not an eclectic, not a traditionalist. The book is not a compendium of what experts say. There are no footnotes. His writing on medicine, psychology, religion, politics, law, must be read.

The adjacent article which is *not* part of the book illustrates the style and scope of his writings.

We urge you to order SEX FROM A DIFFERENT POSITION without delay. The book is a large (8½ x 11), soft cover volume of 310 pages, set in ITC Bookman type which is especially easy on the eyes, but the text is most challenging to the mind. The author chose the type style. In addition to being a clinical psychologist, he is also an eye doctor as well as a specialist in forensic and antitrust law, having received his law degree in 1957. The price of the book is $11.00, plus $1.50 postage and handling for each copy.

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BOOKS & THE ARTS.

Prizewinning Poets – 1986

The winners of Discovery—The Nation, *'86 are Jessica Greenbaum, Daniel Hall, Brigit Pegeen Kelly and Alexander Thorburn. They will read their poems on Monday, April 28, at 8:15 P.M., at The Poetry Center, 92nd Street YM-YWHA in New York City. The contest was judged by Alfred Corn, Rachel Hadas and Susan Mitchell. Now in its twelfth year, the competition combines The Poetry Center's Discovery contest and* The Nation*'s poetry prize. It is open to poets who have not published in book form.*

—Grace Schulman, Poetry Editor

THE HOUSE

Painted white and with a black roof,
our house is a nun separated from its neighbors.

But I can never be sure it will be above me
when I wake.
Sometimes, I find myself lying under the stars
    the house to one side
like a bed I've fallen from.
Covered with dew and in my pajamas,
I open the door and go back inside.

The landscape seeps through
the sides of our house,
a lush, rustling paper that covers the walls.
Birds call, and a stream runs from right to left.

To be ill is wonderful,
to lie listening on a bed
as a lawnmower
sprays grass against the screen,
    to have an ache to raise up
to the world's ache and to whisper,
"I hold myself softly
in the palm of my hand,
this is me" as a grandmother enters
and gently uncurls my fingers
from a pillow.

Or else the house slips over me
as I walk along the street.
I begin to feel it,
    small as a knapsack on my back.
My head and neck protrude from it
like a turtle's.
Frightened, I walk into its sides.
They bulge out elastically,
and as I flail I leave
    the slowly disappearing imprint
of my form in one wall.

The house is woven into a tapestry
    I reach my hand from,
afraid I will tear its cloth.

Alexander Thorburn

YOUNG WIFE'S LAMENT

The mule that lived on the road
where I was married
would bray to wake the morning,
but could not wake me.
How many summers I slept
lost in my hair. How many
mules on how many hills singing.
Back of a deep ravine
he lived, above a small river
on a beaten patch of land.
I walked up in the day and walked down,
having been given nothing
else to do. The road grew no longer,
I grew no wiser, my husband
was always selling things to people who buy.
He went up the road, too, but
the road was full of doors for him,
the road was his belt and,
one notch at a time, he loosened it
on his way. I would sit
on the hill of stones and look down
on the trees, on the lake
far away with its boats and those
who ride in boats
and I could not pray. Some of us
have mule minds,
are foolish as sails whipping
in the wind, senseless
as sheets rolling through the fields,
some of us are not given
even a wheel of a tinker's cart
upon which to pray.
When I came back I pumped water
in the yard under the trees
by the fence where the cows came up,
but water is not wisdom
and change is not made by wishes.
Else I would have ridden something,
even a mule, over
those hills and away.

Brigit Pegeen Kelly

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INCIDENT AT THE LOTUS POOL

Suddenly a bass jumped from the water
and swallowed the hummingbird.
—Mary E. Lockwood, in
Bent's Life Histories

I'd always denied you the mere
existence granted other birds,
never really believing in either
the highly abstract idea
of a bird, or the bee-shaped
aerobatic bit of matter—

I'd overestimated you.
Notwithstanding your astounding
abilities, you were unable
to resist an acre of flawless
glass: to be set, alone,
in that unclouded blue!

Motoring to the middle,
you descended a foot above
your reflection, hovered there
so low you saw nothing
but yourself. No vanity where
perfection views perfection.

A zephyr stirred. Across the pool
a crow kept time, and time slowed,
passing frame by frame.
Hallucinatory at first,
like a vague but nagging sense
of something left behind, or lost,

the ghost image of a death's head
troubled the taut surface
of your attention,
and, as by the deafening clicks
of a darkroom clock, developed
an awful third dimension—

The moment broke. The world became
an upsurging shriek of horror:
the swollen tongue, the well-oiled
hinges closing in . . . there was
barely time to think before
you were no more.

A damp plug of feathers slid
through his corrosive gullet.
The tin-foil iridescence
was slowly undone; the wings,
once a blur of pure motion,
twisted like a pair of broken thumbs.

Beneath the lotus pool still
rippling with reactions,
transfiguring shadows (green to green-
gray to gray) drew him under.
Three pairs of staring eyes were filled
with satisfaction, or with wonder.

Daniel Hall

WHY WOMEN CRY WHEN PLATES BREAK

These past months won't take anything
To heart. Whatever has resonance one day,
Flattens into silence the next,
Like the lake's surface after swallowing
Secrets whole. Since the world
Will not attach itself, I have learned
To borrow, and I attempt humility. But
I can't help wondering why nothing is
Mine to name, or why, behind its blue
Curtain of rain, November offers
No vessel to harbor my invisibility. I'm
Not past caring, but the drama's become
More hidden, like a water table,
Or a work table in the basement. When
The drumroll of rain stops,
There's color in the Wild Tea roses,
But no illumination to be drawn
From their relation to anything else. I'm not
Past caring, but I may be growing
Hard of hearing. My granddaughter
Reminds me, the walnut that once colored
My hair, glows elsewhere. Sometimes, she
Says, on a cat, sometimes a tree limb.
I choose to think my life's stowed
In what I keep around me, not running off
Down an alley or contributing to some
Stranger's shade. And though I keep
My granddaughter as close as I can,
The family has spilled
Like the table's centerpiece, and I'm
Too modern to think the vase of roses
Could be up to its neck in water again.
So I'm working. These past months
It's more difficult to rub color
Into the aspens, to make fire
From the unlikely combination of sticks
And sticks. Passion's taken her own
Tack, so I'm painting in the basement,
The shelves of board games and train parts,
Inanimate ambassadors to a childhood
That won't take me back. The world
Comes up through china, resonant with
The voices that once bid me live, and now are
Stacked in families, silent. That's why
I break when the plates crack.

Jessica Greenbaum

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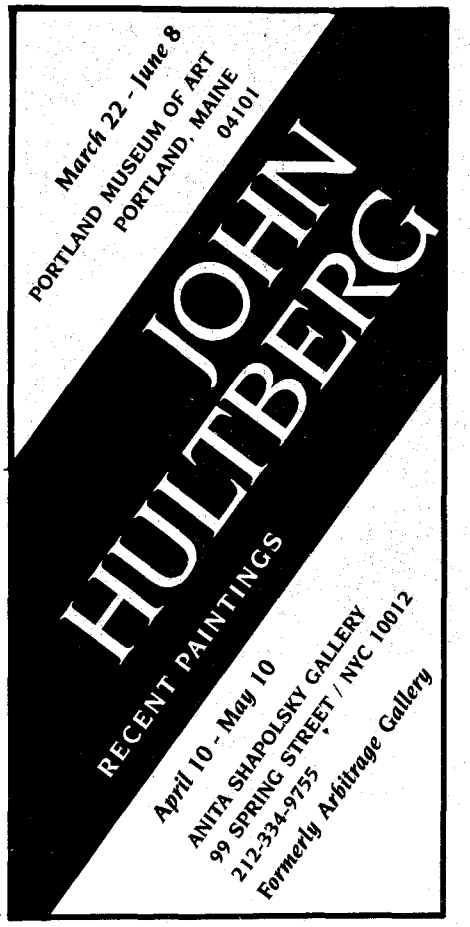

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Metaphysical Hicks

JACK KILLEY

It may be a good cure for certain puzzled authors, groping for what they hope are morbid themes, to charm themselves back into the sweet normality of their little hometowns or to converse in apostrophic dialect with husky men of the soil.

—Vladimir Nabokov, "The Art of Literature and Commonsense"

He stopped for gas at the Aw-Kum-On Garage and told the attendant about the deer. The man said that there was still plenty of deer at the pond because no yids ever went there. He said it wasn't the hunters who drove out the deer, but the yids.

—Nathaniel West, Miss Lonelyhearts

Strange and troubling things happen here in the country, but not with a frequency that jades. Anomalies and abnormalities are scattered over time, limited by sparse populations and indeed made conspicuous and memorable by the immutable chiaroscuro of stable families, church suppers, school auxiliaries and censorious gossip. Were there an Amish deconstructionist or conservative Episcopalian in the neighborhood, I'd know it.

Thus this rube from Hiram, Ohio, is puzzled by the characterizations of rural people that are the fashion in the fiction pages of magazines like *The Atlantic* and *The New Yorker*. The perpetrators of hick chic have loosed upon the serious reading public a menagerie of troubled, gloomy hayseeds and ruminative rustics with enough free-floating anxiety and nameless dread to keep a PEN congress happy for nearly ten minutes.

For the purposes of this brief essay, "hick chic" shall be defined as any novel or short story of the last ten years that is set in a rural or semirural locale and (a) purports to be or is described by a critic as "a terrifying vision of ordinary life in this country"; (b) includes a visit to a K Mart, HoJo's, Kwik Stop or other retail or service establishment in which an employee or innocent bystander is described as "vacant-eyed," "fat," "polyester-encased" or "possum-eared"; or (c) features a protagonist who would be a candidate for euthanasia in Britain.

Now, granted, that doesn't narrow it down much. I suggest for a start that deep space itself is too small to accommodate the pessimism, the whining, the moral cowardice, the passivity characteristic of the bleak negations stamped out with such cloying piety by authors as similar as Raymond Carver, Bobbie Ann Mason, Carolyn Chute and Jayne Anne Phillips. Some members of this quartet are guiltier than others of bashing the boonies, and there is no question that their imitators will continue the literary carpetbagging, so to name more names here would be to quibble over codicils in a vast and regrettably influential opus. I speak of a mood, not a text, a carefully choreographed pileup of dime-store tragedy upon cant gravity upon dead stares. This stuff is supposed to teeter delicately over a presumed abyss of moral terror or the generic wasteland the Postmoderns pack in their shaving kit, but it's as flat as a road kill and less exciting.

Perhaps you've read the story: truck-stop waitresses supposedly too stupid to laugh at *Newhart* drop piquant Gertrude Steinisms as readily as soapy ketchup bottles. Teens moan and mope, too ill even to cruise and bust windows like they used to. Parents who presumably voted for Reagan, or didn't vote at all, suddenly wring their hands over MIRVs and toxic waste. Homes riven by adultery, divorce and alcoholism fog up with radon gas and post-traumatic stress disorder. Some cows are usually put within shouting distance of all this in a transparent attempt to convince readers they are not on the West Side of Manhattan. Underlying these symptoms is a strong hint that the neurosis is a virulent new variety of home-grown anhedonia, an inexorable effluvial cloud of modern-age discontent that has suffused the village green and is fast dissolving the steely sinews of the American stoic.

I say new, because where the boondocks used to be portrayed as merely bigoted, parochial and ignorant, they are now febrile, anxious and troubled. To say they are entirely one or the other is inaccurate; to say they are both is absurd. Remember Robert Duvall screaming, "Charlie don't surf!" in *Apocalypse Now*? Well, try to imagine me screaming, with comparable fervor and comparable biceps, "Joseph K. and the Stranger don't bowl!" Nor do they drink Pabst, drive pickups or raise blue ticks.

Permit me a little game if you will: let

Jack Killey is a former editor of Western Reserve *and a freelance writer.*

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me establish myself as a credible witness to the hick chic phenom with several words about my hometown, and then consider the possibilities for painting the place over in mental-institution green.

A one-stoplight, one-college village in northeastern Ohio, Hiram is an hour from a subtitled film, forty-five minutes from a Volvo dealer and delightfully mime-free when the college isn't in session or in earnest. K Marts, Dairy Queens and trailer parks, hick chic's ubiquitous *bêtes noires*, hover scant miles away like menacing U.F.O.s, beckoning satanically to the heavily mortgaged, cholesterol-conscious Hiramite with kids to shoe. In short, Hiram is bucolic and peaceful, neither a catfighting academic enclave nor an N.R.A. war zone. The town is full of people who can remember hardship and white butter without pair-bonding the two. The unemployment rate around here is just west of Youngstown.

So, by the standards of hick chic, Hiram and environs should be in the toilet, or at least squishing with enough depression, anomie and doubt to qualify as the locus of a Fiction Collective novel. Would that this electron of an attitude were limited to the small orbit of the little magazines. But no, *The New York Review of Books* gleefully comments on a nation

> where farms, no longer profitable, are giving way to subdivisions spreading across the landscape like oil slicks; where the women take jobs in supermarkets, and where a harassed preacher, faced with dwindling congregations, makes his living during the week as an electrician, working out of a van. Marriages are breaking up—or casually coming apart. Retired farmers leave for Florida in their fancy campers.

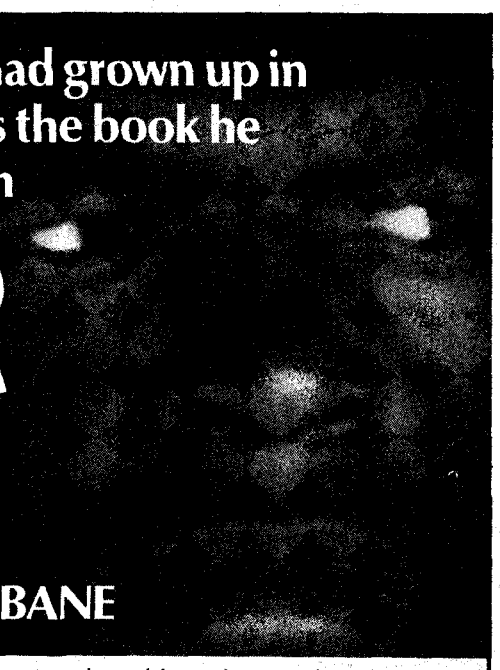
Isn't there a Chesterton adage linking the collapse of civilization with women taking jobs in supermarkets? There must be. Anne Tyler, after all, rates the above author a "master" and her stories "real literature." The nation in crisis is, of course, Bobbie Ann Mason's New South. Readers with a knowledge of geography might point out the distance between northeastern Ohio and western Kentucky, but the *N.Y.R.B.* critic assures us that "[Mason's] small district encompasses much of the US as we now experience it."

O.K., that puts Hiram in the hick sheikdom, which is a bailiwick strewn with strange people, littered with corpses, maritally balkanized and spiritually exhausted. As a hick chic author in a region going to hell, my problem would

If Richard Wright had grown up in South Africa, this is the book he would have written

KAFFIR BOY

By MARK MATHABANE



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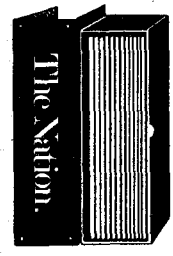

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lie not in a dearth of material to draw on but in an excess of it. I'll try to select from this morass of despair and aberrant behavior a few representative nuggets of rural decay.

Well, 1832 was a bad year for Joseph Smith, Mormon poohbah. Legend here has it that he was unfortunate enough to misspell the name of an influential Hiram settler when demonstrating his supposedly infallible revelatory automatic writing. The prophet was encouraging the locals to consecrate their land to his new church. Smith and entourage were bundled out of town in a tar-coated, feather-speckled lump that probably wriggled with muffled denunciations of that newfangled bugbear, the literate farmer.

Vachel Lindsay, minor moony poet and archetypal weirdo, attended Hiram College and often waxed lyrical over the village's hillocky, virginal beauty. He drank Drano, or at least its generic equivalent, in 1931.

Hart Crane, devotee of Rimbaud and the French Symbolists, Boswell to the Brooklyn Bridge, spent his formative years in a town three miles from Hiram. He jumped ship in the Gulf of Mexico about six months after Lindsay hit the floor.

One of the village's more colorful eccentrics was a woman artist who ate grass. Late spring would find her hand-shearing her lawn and filling baskets with the stuff, chirping, "First clipping is always the best!" to neighbors and passers-by.

If it sounds like I'm reaching, it's because I am. I grope for the untoward, the gravely suggestive, the perversely memorable, the genuinely tragic rips in the patchwork of Hiram, Ohio, and this is what I come up with. Faint daguerreotypes, and cobwebby to boot; hardly useful as urgent warnings of the breakdown of modern society.

And yet, as a resourceful writer, I should be able to conscript these long-dead people into an assemblage of pallbearers for rural life in Hiram. Remember, the prominence and centrality that I, as a rural fictionalist, would assign these characters says far more about my needs as a writer than it does about life in the country. Fidelity to prevalent literary fashion would greatly outweigh the putative need for verisimilitude. I must make things happen in a region where not much happens; I must empty the red brick Protestant church on the corner, fill the dead-quiet homes with the sound of feuds and hurled glassware, dispossess the sheltered and above all lift the happy and secure from their foolish netherworld of self-deceit to the high plateau of cosmological dread and self-obsession. Anything less dramatic, and a *Kenyon Review* editor or *Atlantic* intern risks a paper cut in speeding a polite rejection.

Assuming as a hick chic hallmark an interest in the common man, I will have to eschew the college students and faculty in favor of an unlettered village denizen, say the gas jockey at the corner Sohio. He can no longer be cast as Nathaniel West's cavalier bigot, country folk having been elevated from colorful primitives to fey decadents. Thus his most marketable mien is a wistful and gloomy amalgam of Crane and Lindsay; his addled syntax will be a coded narrative of inarticulate anguish, his mumbletypeg scars shadows of suicide attempts. Perhaps in my story he could touch off his funeral pyre at the pumps, flattening half the town and attracting a swarm of network news choppers. (Well, maybe an affiliate minicam crew.)

Or I could choose to immortalize one of the many farmers in the area, a descendant of Joseph Smith's nemesis. My farmer, however, must lose his faith, not assert it, and lose his land as well. If he is to have any religion at all, it must be on the order of a gnostic revisionism or dissatisfaction that hurts rather than helps him. He must at all costs, being a modern-day farmer, not farm and not prosper. Corn and faith rate yawns even around here, but their sinister connotations of nourishment and happiness render them inadmissible to modern fiction.

The grass-eating artist must go. She is far too funny and cheerful for my anhedonic rural universe. Furthermore, she eats grass deliberately and benignly; it's a pleasure, not an addiction. Hmm, maybe if she were being puppet-mastered by a quack diet guru . . .

I'm the first to champion the country as the breeding ground of eccentrics. Rural life turns out some of the most delightful oddballs on earth. But hick chic's eccentrics are, by and large, akin in name only to the lighthearted creations of Waugh or Wodehouse. They're twisted, not askew; they frighten rather than divert. They've jumped from the light and air of unconventional behavior into the shadows of sociopathic acts and schizoid logic. Authors who create eccentrics delight in the fact that it takes all kinds to make a world. Writers who construct cynical malcontents delight in the fact that it takes only one kind to ruin a world. If that isn't a Chesterton adage, it should be.

The origin and progression of the new rural anhedonia is to me glaringly simple. Rural people just haven't read enough modern fiction to know that they should be unhappy. In their perverse way, the literati are offering their finely etched and lovingly burnished discontent to the farmer and the waitress as an enlightening and instructive gift, like a wall map of missile silos and toxic waste dumps the recipients can superimpose over their milk routes and grandchildrens' backyards.

What rural folk may lack in intellectual fecundity, they make up in a stubborn individuality and a can-do ability to adapt—perhaps even to settle for less—that is incompatible with the fussy perfectionism of the artistic sensibility, which necessarily operates under the flashing spurs of disappointment and frustration.

Wimps, losers, sociopaths, psychopaths, drunkards, malcontents and sleazebags pepper the fictional rural landscape these days simply because the boondocks don't move quickly or errantly enough to keep up with the worried and jangled minds of attitudinizing, cosmopolitan authors who have run out of asphalt and crabgrass on which to park their garish sound trucks. That some of these writers happen to have been born or raised in or near the country should by no means suggest to readers that they are in the capable hands of someone with a balanced view of rural life. More likely they are in the hands of someone who was stuffed into wastebaskets and suspected of plagiarism throughout high school.

These are the sins of the country: smooth diurnal rhythms; relatively stable social institutions; a propensity to cure rather than court ornamental disease; indifference to self-flagellation and neurotic self-examination; above all, flat rejection of oppression as the universal human condition. For these sins, the country is being savaged by writers whose pleasant and rather tame surroundings cannot provide the emotional pain and the Dostoyevskian troika races that their craft and their readers demand.

A parting anecdote. In 1982, while

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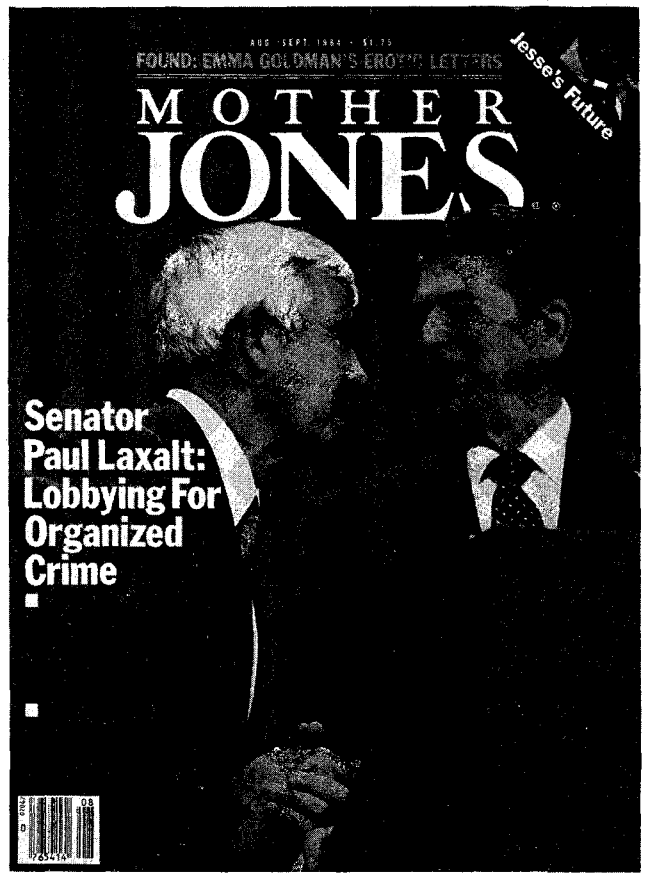

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co-editing a regional history bimonthly then based in Hart Crane's hometown, I heard the following yarn, no doubt true. A Warren, Ohio, *Tribune Chronicle* reporter, covering the fiftieth anniversary of Crane's death, asked for directions to the poet's birthplace at the village police station. The cop on duty said, "Crane. Wasn't he the fire chief once?"

No, but he is now. □

Unsettling the Land

CAROL POLSGROVE

THE WILD BIRDS: Six Stories of the Port William Membership. *By Wendell Berry. North Point Press. 146 pp. $13.95.*

Writing a few years ago in *The Smithsonian*, Wendell Berry recalled a summer day in 1956 when he looked down on the Kentucky land where he would eventually live:

> Standing there, I was looking at land where one of my great-great-great-grandfathers settled in 1803, and at the scene of some of the happiest times of my own life, where in my growing-up years I camped, hunted, fished, boated, swam and wandered—where, in short, I did whatever escaping I felt called upon to do. It was a place where I had happily been, and where I always wanted to be. And I remember gesturing toward the valley that day and saying to the friend who was with me: "That's all I need."

Eight years later he returned and bought the house and land. "Thus," he wrote, "began a profound change in my life. Before, I had lived according to expectation rooted in ambition. Now I began to live according to a kind of destiny rooted in my origins and in my life."

Berry had been writing all along. He had finished his first novel, *Nathan Coulter*, in the late 1950s and had started his second, *A Place on Earth*, when he moved home to Kentucky. But better work was to come: in 1974 he published *The Memory of Old Jack*, a book thick with respect for rural life.

If Berry had been living by ambition, he would have continued writing fiction and building up his reputation as a novelist. But living as a farmer along the Kentucky River, he began to till his literary soil in whatever way seemed suitable for the slant of the land. Sometimes he wrote poetry, sometimes essays, and once a thoughtful book-length critique of industrial farming, *The Unsettling of America*.

"If I had lived away," he told me recently, "I might have led a more literary life. But living here there's always been not just the necessity to write about my subject but to defend it. I'm probably in the first generation of country writers who haven't been able to take the land and the people for granted. But the fact is unavoidable—you can't look away from it: both are being destroyed in my time."

And so Berry has become known in some circles chiefly as a defender of farming as something higher than industry: as a responsible relationship between human beings and the land and among human beings themselves. He often speaks to audiences who are unaware that he is a poet and novelist. But those who read and loved *The Memory of Old Jack* must have wondered when he would get back to fiction. Now, with *The Wild Birds*, he has.

The places and people of *The Wild Birds* are familiar from his earlier fiction. Here, in six stories scattered across a thirty-seven-year period, we meet them in either younger or older incarnations or in relations that change our perceptions of them.

For those who have read *A Place on Earth*, the most satisfying story in the new collection may be "The Boundary," in which Mat Feltner, a man still in his prime in the novel, has grown old. Taking his last walk upon his land, he gives Berry the opportunity to do what he does best: trace the movement of a mind across place and time.

> He comes into the deeper shade of the older part of the woods where there is little browse and the cattle seldom come, and here he sits down at the root of an old white oak to rest. As many times before, he feels coming to him the freedom of the woods, where he has no work to do. He feels coming to him such rest as, bound to house and barn and garden for so long, he had forgot.

To those who know country life, there may be too much tender elegy in Berry's rendering. Mat Feltner's life has been touched by sadness, sorrow, but not by meanness, in the sense of cruelty or of days devoid of meaning. Berry does not intend to carve out a slice of rural life. He is dreaming life as it can be, not necessarily as it is. His dreams take shape out of the rural life he's known, but they are still dreams. His fiction is almost utopian.

"I'm not just interested in people as they are," he says. "I'm interested in the possibilities that are suggested by people as they are. There are some stories in *The Wild Birds* that reach toward that kind of realization—not just what community has in fact meant in my experience but what is suggested by my experience of community."

One of those stories, "It Wasn't Me," the most overtly philosophical in the collection, is, indeed, a virtual essay by the end. When Old Jack Beechum dies, he leaves his farm to his city-dwelling daughter. But, in an unconventional move, he leaves half the purchase price to the tenants of the farm, a young couple who have cared for the land. To his lawyer and friend Wheeler Catlett he leaves the task of making the transaction work.

Here the chill shadow of a city ethic falls over the story. To Jack's daughter and her banker husband, the farm is property, and they mean to sell it, not to the tenants at the price Jack set, but at auction to the highest bidder. In answer to Wheeler's plea that Old Jack not only wanted "to put the good people and the good farm together" but that he also loved his tenants, the daughter replies, "My father's loves are not mine."

And so the story connects the obligations of blood, friendship and love to the obligations people have to the land. In Berry's mind, a world that treats land as property is also a world in which a daughter would refuse to carry out her dying father's wish. Set against that broken world is the "Port William Membership"—a community joined not just by friendship, blood and sharing of a common place, but by knowledge. "The land expects something from us," Wheeler says. "The line of succession, the true line, is the membership of people who know it does."

In "The Wild Birds," another story on the theme of unconventional inheritance, Wheeler's friend Burley Coulter—a careless, kind and sometimes comic

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Carol Polsgrove is a writer from Kentucky whose work has appeared in The Atlantic *and* The Progressive.

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character in earlier fiction—comes to him with an irregular request: Burley wants to leave his land to the illegitimate son he has loved but never acknowledged. The surprise of seeing that even in a small and close community a man may live a secret life, have a secret self, is sharper in this story than in any others. But one of the pleasures of reading Berry's fiction lies in watching characters go in and out of focus—appearing and reappearing, now on center stage, now on the periphery.

We also get a sense of the past still spreading throughout the present in these stories. That sense has been heightened for Berry because he lives in the place he knew as a child and writes about as an adult. "I've always had to think about the past not as recalled but as a cause and influence in the present in which I'm living. You need to see what things have led to before you understand them."

Thus he explains why "The Wild Birds," the last of the stories, takes place almost twenty years ago, at about the time he moved back to Kentucky. Even then, the decay of rural life had started to become visible in the empty stores and empty streets of a once busy country town. Finishing the story and the volume I felt the incompleteness of the larger story Berry has been telling throughout his fiction. In *The Wild Birds* he has only just begun to write about the change he's seen in rural life and chronicled so well in his nonfiction—not just economic change, but change in spirit, as farmers are pushed to the very margins of our culture. Unless he moves forward in time and confronts the difficult rural present, Berry's fiction may too easily be read as nostalgic fantasy—not the moral challenge he means it to be. □

Ain't God Good to Indiana!

GERALD WEALES

THE HOOSIER POLITICIAN: Office-holding and Political Culture in Indiana, *1896–1920. By Philip R. VanderMeer. University of Illinois Press. 256 pp. $19.95.*

Booth Tarkington was already a successful novelist in 1902 when he was elected to the Indiana General Assembly. Like most of the legislators between 1896 and 1920, he was an amateur politician, apparently motivated by civic responsibility, who held no prior offices, served only one term and returned to what professional politicians call civilian life. At 33, he was younger than most legislators, who tended to be older than the general populace, and, like them, he was better educated than the average Hoosier (he had almost graduated from Princeton). Like most of the legislators, he was middle class, and like many of them, he had a father whose occupation (lawyer) allowed him to function comfortably in public, a family environment presumably congenial to the incipient politician, however amateur. The Tarkingtons were more political than the families of most legislators; Booth's father was a judge and a former legislator, his California uncle was a U.S. Senator and both Indiana Senators were family friends. Otherwise he was much of a muchness with his fellows in the Assembly (although most of them had not written *Monsieur Beaucaire*), which meant that, in a state strongly given to partisan politics, he had to have a party affiliation. Statistics, which have been "laid down for our guidance," as Lady Bracknell says, dictated that Tarkington be a Republican. He was an urban "other professional" I assume, there being no listing for novelist. Although the unchurched tended to be Democratic and Tarkington had little connection with organized religion, his parents were Presbyterian and his grandfather had been a circuit-riding Methodist—both Evangelical denominations—and Evangelicals were usually Republican, since sect and party shared a longing to legislate morality. Tarkington's parents were Indiana-born, of English stock, coming more immediately from Connecticut and North Carolina, all of which—even North Carolina—say Republican during this period in Indiana. These facts about Tarkington and his background are common knowledge to anyone who has just jogged his memory by looking at a reputable biography. The comparisons come from Philip R. VanderMeer's *The Hoosier Politician*.

The Hoosier Politician is one of those fascinating and largely unreadable books that I occasionally come across when I wander into unfamiliar scholarly

Gerald Weales is an expatriate Hoosier who is at work, very slowly, on a book about Indiana.

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enclaves. VanderMeer intends to illuminate politics during the Progressive Era (he speaks in capitalized periods of time: the Gilded Age) in Indiana and perhaps, by extension, in other parts of the country. His means is a collective biography of the legislators during this period, a group that he chose partly because there is more accessible data on them than on local officeholders and partly because, as a bridge between the local and state/Federal officials, they provide a group portrait that illustrates the relationship of residence, occupation, religion, ethnicity and family background to political allegiance at a time when politics in Indiana was undergoing an important change. VanderMeer emphasizes continuity, partly to counter the popular assumption that a new political world suddenly burst on the scene at the turn of the century. Yet his book indicates that in the period within which he operates, there was a movement away from the legislator who spoke for a community toward one who represented a special interest, and that political parties and the Assembly itself became more formally organized on the model of the corporation. This laid the ground for the professional politician to replace the amateur and, although VanderMeer does not develop the point, for much of the electorate to turn away from a process that was once central to Indiana life.

For all that his group portrait and its implications are important, I have some doubts about the study. There are holes in the available data, as the appendix indicates, but I am more ill at ease with the presentation of what he has. The interpretation of data is a mystery for adepts. As one of the uninitiated, I am willing to accept VanderMeer's general picture, although his fondness for the words "complex" and "complexity" suggests that there is more here than meets the eye. Or less. When a table tells me that 50 percent of the Unitarians in the Assembly were Republican, 50 percent Democrat, and I realize that we are talking about two men over a period of twenty-five years, my Hoosier skepticism raises its head.

Collective biography is a valuable scholarly tool for an understanding of "political culture." Yet Hoosier political culture in this period is more than VanderMeer's tables suggest. It is Tarkington, as an atypical Republican, supporting the Sunday baseball bill and fighting his party's governor over an attempt to replace the reformatory board, and then, after leaving the Assembly, writing the political stories that make up *In the Arena* (1905). It is a comedy like George Ade's *The County Chairman* (1903). It is a noncomedy like Eugene V. Debs's willingness to go to jail for his pacifist beliefs. It is Kin Hubbard, some of whose caricatures appear in *The Hoosier Politician*, whose character Abe Martin spoke to and for a lot of ordinary Hoosiers; and it is Hubbard's readers who responded happily to lines like "We'd all like t'vote fer th' best man, but he's never a candidate." And it is also, if I may go beyond the designated period, my bemused respect for *The Hoosier Politician*. □

EXCHANGE.

(*Continued From Page 602*)

'SCREAMING RHETORIC'

Hanover, N.H.

I am sure I am not alone in being outraged by Gore Vidal's essay. His personal quarrel with Norman Podhoretz and Midge Decter is one that could have been better conducted in a private shouting match.

I am delighted with one passage in Gore Vidal's essay, in which he says complimentary things about Peace Now, the organization of Zionists in Israel and the United States who stand for moderate policies. He then, alas, veers off into a diatribe against both Jews and Arabs, suggesting that he would not weep very much if they got out of America's hair, even if that meant that they would "blow one another up, or whatever." This is the screaming rhetoric of American nativism, in the accents of patrician highhandedness and self-righteousness.

Gore Vidal has clearly been reading too much of Henry Adams. *Arthur Hertzberg*

This was my "screaming rhetoric": "The time has come for the United States to stop all aid not only to Israel but to Jordan, Egypt and the rest of the Arab world. The Middle Easterners would then be obliged to make peace, or blow one another up, or whatever." The good rabbi, eager to add his eloquent voice to the chorus of hate, carefully left out "to make peace," the whole point to my suggestion. Luckily, I am used to being lied about.

EDITORS' NOTE

The identification accompanying Harold Feeney's April 19 article, "No Regrets—We'd Do It Again," should have noted that the Fund for Investigative Journalism provided funding for the article.

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X-523

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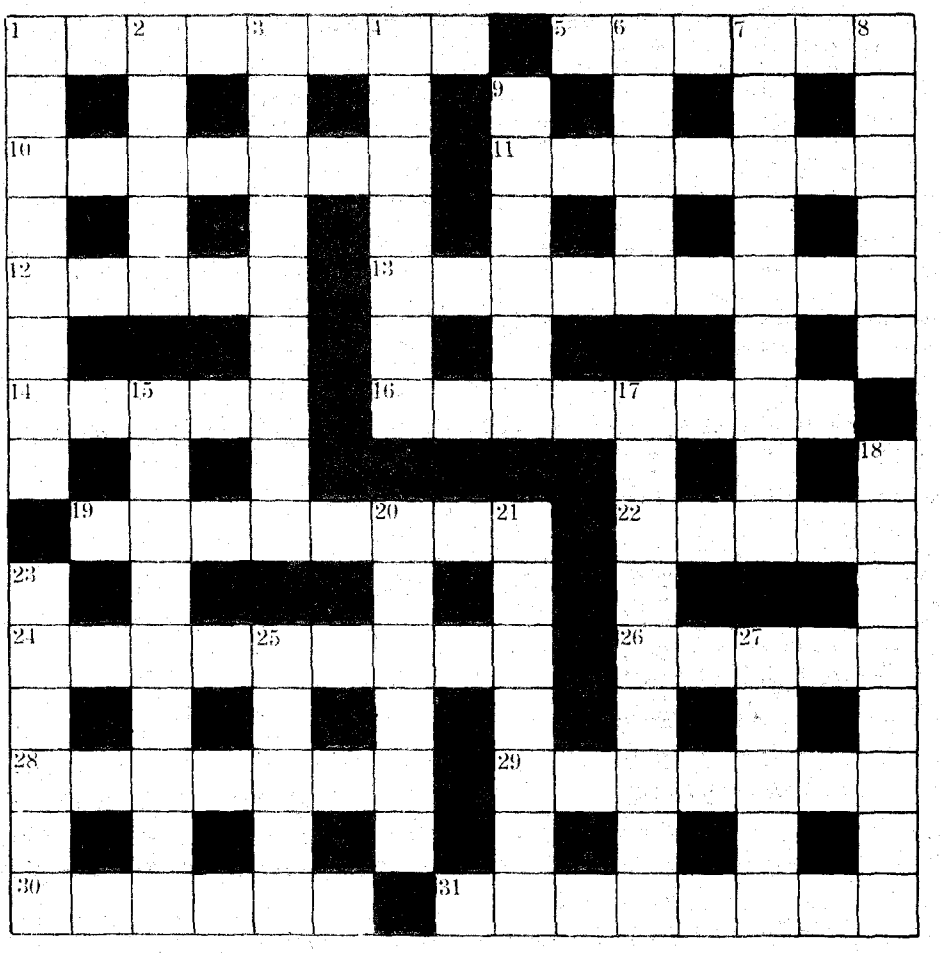

ACROSS

1 and 5 Tobacco might, but not to prevent lapsus linguae. (4,4,6)
10 The final rate is changed, in place of play. (7)
11 No longer in good standing, what might be one of triumph with a different C.I.A. (7)
12 Part with this, and you'll get the bird—the long, narrow upper part. (5)
13 Took away the dishes, as it did after the storm. (7,2)
14 Invocation to the wise man of the Indian tribe. (5)
16 The British lift returning decay after getting leave, in a way. (8)
19 The euphemism is not for sleeping accommodations, though one might question its location. (8)
22 How one might go in, uninvited, being lighter. (5)
24 It might involve a sitting job, though the charges are small at such a center. (5,4)
26 Drink from it, perhaps, in California a couple of times, and Ohio only once. (5)
28 Such a lady in the 10 isn't just an usherette. (7)
29 One might look for it in the interim, perhaps, but it might take some time to arrive at it. (7)
30 and 31 It sometimes seems pointless, but that's one thing about Greyhound, you can never tell! (6-3,5)

DOWN

1 and 23 ... design with something that sweeps around with snakeskin, perhaps. (To be frequently checked by those who expect to lose?) (8,6)
2 Some material obtained from the "daft wee daughter." (5)
3 The conductor might bring his hand down where copper used to be found. (2,3,4)
4 It might spell trouble, with a race he found difficult. (7)
6 This man might be much sought after by those you see in the 10. (5)
7 It once was the social thing to do in Europe, and got "R.U.R." in trouble. (5,4)
8 See with difficulty the covering inside, and get away quickly! (6)
9 You might find me in the opening of a cell, perhaps. (6)
15 That's what some people say about our country—it could be revealed in a camera. (9)
17 When it's close, crab salad could suggest things even fishier! (9)
18 Love is in trouble all over New York, for example—but that's how fast things go! (8)
20 Starting with the circle where home is supposedly found out West—possibly coming from Florida or California. (6)
21 Some art might be confused with this, but one might be a leading man, of sorts. (7)
23 See 1 down
25 The subject of 30-31 gets around in performing this. (5)
27 Part of the toxic air of the city? (5)

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ANNOUNCING:
THE NATION FACT-FINDERS
TOUR TO ISRAEL
AUGUST 16–AUGUST 31

Find out for yourself what's going on in Israel and the Occupied Territories. Join The Nation Fact-Finders for a thought-provoking journey to the heart of the Middle East.

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HIGHLIGHTS

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